

FREE

# Kent on Sunday

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WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

East edition No 654

edFENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

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Bishop of Dover's Easter message

## POLITICS

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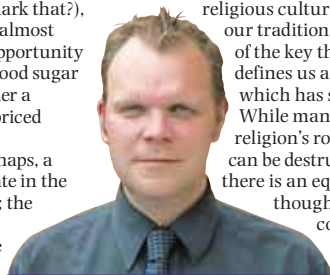
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## Has Easter story been swamped by egg craze?

WHILE many would argue the original Christian Christmas message has been swamped by a tsunami of commercialism, we should first examine how the original purpose of Easter has slipped from view.

Despite the 'political correctness gone mad' aspect of nativity plays being phased out to avoid causing offence (regardless of faith, we celebrate Christmas as part of our culture as a consequence of the Christian message embedding itself upon ancient Pagan traditions so surely we should mark that?), Easter has become almost nothing if not an opportunity for our collective blood sugar levels to rocket under a mountain of over-priced chocolate designs.

Yet Easter is, perhaps, a more significant date in the Christian calendar; the crucifixion of Jesus and his remarkable return two days later. As a story it



Editor **Chris Britcher**

packs far more punch, intrigue and drama than any work of fiction.

But unlike Christmas, where the Christian overtones underpin the festive season, Easter is now a period recognised more for the time off it affords and the development of our sweet tooth, than a moment of quiet reflection or a focus on family unity. And regardless of your religious beliefs, or otherwise, that's rather a shame.

You don't have to believe in the stories of the Bible to not at least ensure our children are aware of the

religious culture which dictates our traditions; it is, after all one of the key things which defines us as a nation and which has shaped us.

While many will argue religion's role in this world can be destructive and divisive, there is an equally as powerful thought that mere

commercialism is equally as damaging. Enjoy your weekend.

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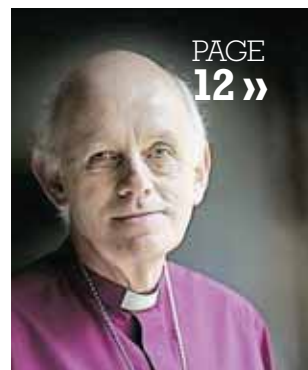
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## Work derails rail service over Easter bank holiday

By Chris Britcher

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TRAVELLERS planning to use the train this weekend are being warned of significant disruption to services as a result of engineering work.

Charing Cross, Cannon Street and Waterloo East stations will be closed until Tuesday, with services instead running to and from New Cross, Victoria or Blackfriars.

In addition, London Bridge – which has been at the centre of extensive work over recent months as part of a multi-million pound modernisation – will be running a very restricted Southeastern service, with only trains to and from Hastings serving the station.

As a consequence of signal works, there will also be no trains between Swanley and Faversham and between Sittingbourne and Sheerness.

Trains to or from Victoria will be diverted via Maidstone East to connect with replacement bus services.

And high speed services to and from St Pancras via Gravesend and Rochester will start and terminate at Strood and Faversham.



**DIVERTED:** Check before you set out this bank holiday weekend if you intend to travel by train

Replacement buses will run between Swanley/Maidstone East/Strood and Faversham. Replacement buses will also run between Sittingbourne and Sheerness.

A spokesman for Southeastern explained: "There is significant engineering work taking place across the Southeastern network over the Easter weekend which may affect your journey."

"This is to allow improvement work to take place as part of the

Thameslink Programme and the east Kent resignalling works.

"It will impact some passengers travelling across Kent as well as to and from London."

"An amended timetable will operate throughout the four day Easter weekend from Good Friday to Easter Monday."

"There will be changes to where trains stop and some trains will be terminating at different terminals. Please check before you travel."

Those planning to travel are advised to visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Ticket holders will be able to use the London Underground between Southwark and Embankment and Canada Water, overground between New Cross and Canada Water and the Docklands Light Railway between Lewisham and Greenwich.

All services will return to normal by Tuesday.

## Police funds boosted as county gets £3m of Home Office funding

KENT's police force is set to benefit from £3 million of extra funding after successful bids for the cash by the county's police and crime commissioner Ann Barnes.

The money comes at a vital time for the force, which has had to make swingeing cuts due to reductions in funding from central government.

The money has been secured from the Home Police Innovation Fund, a £50m fund set up to improve policing through innovative thinking.

The fund invites bids from forces across England and Wales.

Some £1.5m has been awarded directly to the county for three projects, including a seven-days-a-week virtual remand court and collaborative police procurement, as well as a project to fight international internet paedophilia.

This project will see police work with the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (CEOP), National Crime Agency (NCA) and the University of Liverpool to develop innovative

tools to protect children and deal with online child sexual exploitation.

Another £1.5m has been secured for projects to run in collaboration with Essex Police and other forces, including an IT system that will save police time and money.

Mrs Barnes said: "Although this fund is not new money, but has come from the national police grant, I'm absolutely delighted that Kent is going to receive this share of money from the Home Office. It will make a huge difference at a time when there are further deep cuts to police funding on the horizon."

Superintendent Martin Wilson, Kent Police's head of innovation, added: "This is an excellent result for Kent with additional funding to help us tackle crime whilst making the very best use of modern technologies."

"We will also be delivering projects that improve efficiency across the criminal justice system as well as within our administrative functions."

## Killer of medical student, 22, faces death sentence

A 23-year-old fishmonger was this week facing the death penalty after being found guilty of the murder of Kent medical student Aidan Brunger in a violent attack in Borneo.

Mr Brunger, 22, from Hempstead, near Gillingham, had been in the country as part of a medical course. His friend Neil Dalton was also killed in the attack which took

place in Kuching last August.

The parents of both issued a joint statement following the verdicts.

It said: "They were two exceptional young men with such promise - kind, funny and full of life."

"Although we are pleased that the man responsible for their murders has been held accountable, the guilty verdict does not bring our sons back."

## Take part in our special general election online poll

WITH a month to go before the 2015 general election we want to know your views.

Until Monday we are running a general election survey of visitors to our website, [kentnews.co.uk](http://kentnews.co.uk), on a range of key issues.

These include; the impact the current government has had on your life, whether your vote is still up for grabs and what you

think are the most important issues.

The results will then be published and analysed in our print titles.

We deliberately haven't asked who you will vote for in order to ensure the poll is not hijacked by any particular party. To access the survey visit the page direct at <http://bit.ly/1GfwQ5q>



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## Farage picks Dover to kick off Ukip's campaign

UKIP leader Nigel Farage kicked off his party's election campaign in Dover on Tuesday - perhaps not surprisingly focusing on his party's concerns over immigration levels.

Mr Farage, from Westerham, is standing in South Thanet and has hinted he will step down as leader if he does not get elected.

At the campaign opener, he unveiled a poster

claiming immigration levels were out of control.

Mr Farage said: "We cannot control immigration policy as members of Europe. We want a different relationship with Europe, one that is based on trade, but not on membership of political union."

This week marked the dissolution of Parliament and the start of the election campaigns for all major parties.

## Tory trio's five-point plan to save airport rubbished by site's development duo

By Maria Chiorando

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A CONSERVATIVE plan to revive Manston Airport has been dismissed as 'electioneering' by property developers.

The proposal, launched by Craig Mackinlay, the parliamentary candidate for South Thanet, transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin and North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale, aims to restore the former airhub to a working business.

But the owners of the site, and developers of Sandwich's Discovery Park, Chris Cartner and Trevor Musgrave said the airport had never been a financially viable option.

The site has long been the issue of contention. Ann Gloag, the business magnate behind the Stagecoach travel empire, bought it for £1 in October 2013. She sold a majority stake in the site to Messrs Musgrave and Cartner last September, after closing the airport on May 15, losing around 140 jobs. They now own 80 per cent of a business that owns the land, while



**CANDIDATE:** Mr Mackinlay

Mrs Gloag retains a 20 per cent interest. They are looking at turning the site into a 'mixed-use' area

Now, as part of the five point plan, a consultancy firm will review all the

documents that have informed decisions in relation to Manston. There are plans to try and block planning consent for the proposed development while Craig Mackinlay and Sir Roger will lobby Thanet District Council.

Mr Mackinlay and Sir Roger are calling for Thanet council to issue a Compulsory Purchase Order, which allows an official body to buy a site without the owner's consent. But it would need an indemnity partner.

The airport would then need a licence from the Civil Aviation Authority. Sir Roger said: "The nation needs Manston Airport, Kent needs Manston Airport. There is no 'Plan B' for us. Second-rate options are simply not negotiable."

Messrs Cartner and Musgrave said: "Our proposed development is about creating jobs, the kind of highly skilled jobs that will benefit the economy of Thanet and east Kent for years to come. We are looking to the future, not the past."



**PLANS:** School will open in September

## School to open in Folkestone after KCC nod

KENT County Council has given the green light to a new primary school in Folkestone.

Martello Grove will initially open in September 2015 on the Morehall Academy site. It will remain there on a temporary basis until new school buildings have been completed in Warren Way, Folkestone.

Building work is set to start soon, with education officials stating that the new school should be completed by the end of April 2016.

The new academy will be part of the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust. The trust already runs three academies across the county, including Morehall Academy.

The CEO of Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust, Chris Bowler, said: "We intend to create a centre of excellence in primary education in east Folkestone and work with partner schools, parents and carers and the local community to develop an academy that is outstanding from its first day. It is a very exciting time and we cannot wait to open."

Martello Grove will open initially with three classes: a reception class, and mixed aged classes for years one and two, and years three and four. It is planned for the school to gradually expand as the classes fill up.

## Penshurst Place star of BBC docu-drama

PENSHURST Place is set for another starring role on our television screens in a major three-part BBC historic drama series.

The historic building between Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks was used as a backdrop to Armada: 12 Days to Save England.

It was used to depict the court of Queen Elizabeth in the BBC2 show which will feature former EastEnders' star Anita Dobson as the Queen. It is set to be screen in the spring. It comes just weeks after the venue featured on hit Tudor drama Wolf Hall.

Ben Thomas, estate manager, said: "Seeing the state rooms and Baron's Hall dressed to become the court of Elizabeth I really brought to life the authentic period architecture in the house that has remained remarkably unchanged since the 15th century."

The docu-drama will be presented by Dan Snow and detail the planned Armada invasion of 1588, using previously unpublished information.

## Jail for cruel crook who took war medals

A BURGLAR who took medals belonging to the family of a late Second World War veteran has been jailed for 18 months.

Bradley Richmond, aged 20, of no fixed address, took the military decorations during a raid of a house in Penenden Heath, Maidstone, on January 26.

He also stole a large quantity of other valuables. Richmond was arrested several days later in Folkestone after some of the items taken in the burglary were found in a flat he was known to be living in at the time. He pleaded guilty to the offence and also asked for three other burglaries to be taken into consideration.

Investigating officer Det Con Raj Dusanjh said after the case at Maidstone Crown Court: "Burglary is a terrible crime that leaves a long-lasting impact on victims. Richmond spared no thought for those whose homes he ransacked. Fortunately, the war medals and other possessions he stole were returned to their rightful owners, and I hope the sentencing imposed on Richmond is of some additional comfort."

## Death smash forces closure of motorway

A 32-year-old man from London died in a crash on the M20 motorway on Tuesday, which forced the coastbound stretch of the road to be shut for much of the day.

The cash occurred at around 11.30am and saw the road closed through the afternoon and into the evening rush hour as crash investigation teams descended on the scene, after emergency teams had attempted to save the victim.

The incident happened near junction four of the motorway at Leybourne near Maidstone.

A 32-year-old man from Plumstead, in south east London, died at the scene after his black Jaguar X-type hit the crash barrier near the slip-road.

The coastbound stretch of the motorway was shut between junction two, for Wrotham, and junction four. In addition, the coastbound M26 was closed between junction 2a, for Wrotham and Borough Green, and the M20.

Witnesses who have not yet spoken to police should call 01622 798538, quoting reference 31-48.



# agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

## Ports set for queues as passport rules tighten

THERE is set to be heavy congestion this week at the main ports and Channel Tunnel terminals as passport checks for those travelling out of the country are reintroduced.

Designed to crackdown on immigration issues, currently checks are only conducted by the nation you're travelling into. But as

of Wednesday, British immigration officers will conduct thorough checks too. And that is almost certain to spell delays.

The introduction had been due to start last week, but was delayed to prevent major problems during the Easter getaway.

Eurotunnel chiefs have warned



they fear it could cause major delays with traffic backing up on to the M20.

Travellers are advised to arrive in good time for their trip.

## Jobs threat as B&Q set to axe dozens of its stores

STAFF at one of the biggest chains of DIY firms face an uncertain week after B&Q announced it was to close 60 of its stores, nationwide, over the next two years.

It comes after parent firm Kingfisher reported a 7.5 per cent drop in annual profits. However, some jobs may be

saved - it intends to open a similar number of stores of sister business Screwfix.

There are a host of B&Q stores in the county, including Gravesend, Folkestone, Canterbury and Tonbridge.

Stores earmarked for closure had not been made public at the time of going to press.

## ...also

### Meet top author Anna

BEST-selling author Anna Todd will be signing copies of her new book at Bluewater next weekend.

She will appear at Waterstones in the complex on Sunday, April 19, from noon signing her 'After' series.

### Housing report launch

A REPORT on the housing crisis is going to be launched on Tuesday, penned by one of our MEPs.

Keith Taylor from the Green Party will be in Canterbury to unveil the report at St Paul's Church Hall from 6.30pm.

### Pylon consultation over

NATIONAL Grid has started to work its way through the feedback after the consultation into the Richborough Connection came to a close. It is a string of pylons linking Richborough in Thanet to a sub-station in Canterbury.

### A20 overnight works

THE A20 near Dover will be closed overnight until Tuesday.

Traffic lights are being installed close to the Western Heights roundabout.

The work is being carried out between 8pm and 6am.

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# Hurdling fury over Grand National

Next weekend sees one of sport's most popular horse races, but, once again, it has stirred up mixed reactions

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

**N**Ext weekend, a gargantuan £200 million will be bet on the Grand National, with around two thirds of British adults expected to have a flutter.

But pressure on the world's most famous steeplechase continues to grow with a Tonbridge-based animal charity once again calling for it to be made safer for the horses involved.

And that has sparked another major war of words between charity Animal Aid and the British Horseracing Authority, the sport's governing body.

The authority blasted the charity claiming it just used the Grand National for publicity and pursued objectives which included "promoting entirely vegan lifestyles, banning all farming, asking that public do not donate to cancer research charities, and to ban all horseracing".

The Grand National takes place next Saturday, April 11, at Aintree in Liverpool.

Traditionally one of the most unpredictable of all races due to the number of competitors – up to 40 will go under starter's orders – and the challenge posed by the fences, it has always held a special place in the affections of the public and is one of the biggest days of the year for bookmakers.

"The reason the Grand National attracts so many more people than other races is partly tradition," explains Jon Ivan-Duke, a spokesman for bookmaker William Hill.

"People have grown up watching it on television with their families, or listening to it on the radio."

The event is certainly a remarkable spectacle. Staged since 1839, the fences have been toned down in recent years in a nod towards a shift in public opinion about the safety of the horses taking part.

But it remains one of sport's toughest contests to win.

Mr Ivan-Duke adds: "It's the toughest race there is, so it has that element of excitement with the betting, good atmosphere and fun. It is a high octane sporting event – it cap-

tures the imagination when you have so many horses jumping. It's a tough and unique test, and we expect to take on millions of pounds in bets."

However, according to Animal Aid, the high stakes that make the race exciting, also make it extremely dangerous.

"It is a deliberately hazardous race," says Animal Aid director Andrew Tyler. "A dangerously overcrowded field of horses is forced to confront 30 extraordinarily challenging and treacherous jumps, over a course of four-and-a-half miles."

"Since 2000, 24 horses have died on the Grand National course and, over the course of the three-day meeting, 40 horses have been killed in that same period."

But the British Horseracing Authority says it will not listen to Animal Aid's complaints.

Robin Mounsey, a spokesman for the BHA, explained: "The BHA works closely with respected welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and

World Horse Welfare. "Animal Aid are not a welfare organisation, they are an animal rights campaigning group. Regularly at this time of year they seek to use the publicity of the Grand National to raise their public profile."

"Their objectives include promoting entirely vegan lifestyles, banning all farming, asking that public do not donate to cancer research charities, and to ban all horseracing. Such myopic views fail to grasp that a ban on racing would have a disastrous impact on the thoroughbred as a breed – with the immediate future of thou-

sands of racehorses put at risk, while the breed would gradually disappear."

"Furthermore, a critical industry to the British rural economy, generating £3.45 billion in annual expenditure and providing direct and indirect employment for more than 85,000 people, would be devastated."

While no horses have been killed during the Grand National since 2012, controversy was sparked during the event in 2011, which tabloids dubbed the 'day of horror'. Two horses fell badly and died on impact in full view of an estimated 600 million worldwide viewers.

"More than £1.5m has been invest-



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FREE PARKING in tenterden





ed in safety and welfare measures at the course in recent years, including replacing the timber frames of the fences on the Grand National course with more forgiving plastic birch and natural birch," says Mr Mounsey.

"In staging the race, the balance Aintree racecourse seeks is one which maintains the unique character of the race while also minimising the risk for the horses and riders taking part."

But Animal Aid's Mr Tyler feels the changes aren't enough.

"We work with a very experienced race consultant," he says. "We have looked at the various jumps and have

found there are certain dangers, like the approach angle on certain jumps, as well as uneven heights, poor visibility and very wide fences. We feel these are perversely difficult.

"We want the public to make a judgement on the Grand National, but based on the facts, which are not always transparent."

The RSPCA has worked closely with the race organisers to help improve welfare conditions. But it says it would still like to see a reduction in the size of the field.

Their south east spokeswoman told KoS: "The RSPCA has invested a great deal of resources, expertise and

time over the years working with the horseracing industry to make welfare improvements to the sport. We believe these improvements not only benefit the horses but also jockeys and the sport as a whole.

"The Grand National is a testing course, by its very nature. In recent years the RSPCA has worked with the Aintree management and the British Horseracing Authority who have made a series of welcome changes.

"However, we would still like to see that a reduction of the field numbers remains on the agenda. This is because of the number of horses not remaining in contention at the end of

**LEAP:** Spectacle of the Grand National at Aintree is either loved or loathed

the race; the occasional bunching issues; and the number of loose horses when jockeys become unseated - all of which can increase the potential risks to horse and jockey."

The charity also added that it wants to see jockeys reminded to ensure that the horse's welfare is paramount by pulling up tired horses that are no longer in contention.

The RSPCA concludes: "We will continue to monitor races carefully to see if any injuries or deaths could have been avoided, or if any lessons can be learned to further prevent fa-

talities or injuries. We share our findings with the British Horseracing Authority and the racecourse management and, where appropriate, air our concerns and recommendations to these bodies."

Animal Aid's Mr Tyler adds: "I am sure there are people involved in racing who do care about the animals - we are not saying these people are monsters, our point is that they are involved in a system that routinely harms animals, and often the full extent of the dangers these horses face is not clear to the public."

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Friday, 8th May 2015

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**HOLES:** M2 hole (centre) plus other sinkhole and Deneholes appearing across Kent

# How county faces slumping into the past with sinkhole implosion

Prolonged wet winters are washing away our landscapes leaving some parts of the county literally slipping into a big black hole. But just how are these holes created and what are we falling into?

**By Jamie Weir**

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**T**HEY'VE brought traffic to a stand-still, swallowed people's garden sheds, even uncovered long buried graves. The sinkhole has become a rather familiar sight in the county over recent years.

Just this year, a shed in Swanley was consumed as the ground below it literally opened up beneath it. Homes and businesses around a square in Gravesend had to be evacuated after a gaping hole appeared just last month, while perhaps the best known of them all, was when a 15ft-deep hole suddenly emerged on the central reservation of a busy stretch of the M2 near Faversham this time last year, forcing a partial closure for nine days.

So just what are these sinkholes, or in some cases Deneholes (deep, ancient, man-made chalk mines), and how are they being created?

The M2 hole, which was some 15ft deep and required more than 40 tonnes of pea shingle to fill in, was caused by the wet weather wearing down the soil and weakening the roof of an old man-made chalk mine, according to experts, who found evidence of the activity on old maps.

Initially, however, there was uncertainty, as the entire area rests on chalk bedrock, called the Seaford Chalk Formation. This mineral is partially soluble by weakly acidic water. If it's swamped with water, either because of heavy rainfall or a burst water main, it can erode very fast. Large swathes of the county's geological formation has chalk underlying it, and this has led to fears that sinkholes could crop up with greater regularity.

Especially given climate change making us more vulnerable of heavy, prolonged periods of rainfall.

Dr Vanessa Banks is the team leader for shallow geohazards and risks at the British Geological Survey (BGS) – the leading geoscience research unit in Kent in the future.

She told KoS that there was potential to see more holes opening up in Kent in the future.

"There are a number of issues to be concerned with in the future. High rainfall in Kent could lead to more sinkholes appearing, as water is normally the trigger for them to form," explains Dr Banks.

She said the county was an area which, historically, had a greater number of small chalk mines. These ancient chalk mines, which normally only comprise one shaft, and a single chamber, are the Deneholes.

Dr Banks said: "In medieval times, chalk would be dug up and used on the fields to get them ready and primed for crop planting. Kent also has a number of historic brickworks which would have made use of mined chalk. Where it was taken from the ground, once the reserves were exhausted, the Deneholes would be capped, usually with organic material like wood.

"This organic matter can, over time, give way, leading to Deneholes appearing suddenly. Water, again, can exacerbate this degradation of material and speed the whole process up."

Liquid penetration, it seems, is key to the sinkhole issue. During 2014, a large number of sinkholes appeared, particularly during the early part of the year.

Dr Banks and the BGS attributed this to what was described by the Met Office as an 'exceptional period of winter rainfall'. Between December 2013 and January 2014, the south east witnessed 372.2mm of rain. That was more than any other two month period since 1910.

Dr Banks told KoS: "Those storms saw a powerful jet stream of weather pushing low pressure across the Atlantic which hit the UK. If we saw more of this weather over Kent, then we would almost certainly see more sinkholes and Deneholes likely to emerge."

According to environmental consultant Alice Roper, based on Sheppey, that could be a problem.

Ms Roper said: "Our climate is changing in the UK, and most projections are that we will start to see milder, but wetter weather across the country. This will obviously lead to higher levels of rainfall, which will impact the stability of the ground in places which have lots of chalk.

"Sudden bursts of rain can overwhelm the drainage system already, and this is likely to get worse with more of it across the county. In areas which are underlain by chalk, this could lead to water erosion which could make them unstable."

While sinkholes are an issue, Deneholes could be the big issue in the future, because of the sheer scale of

chalk mining in the county.

Secretary of the Kent Underground Research Group, Hugh Farrar, said that the exact extent of the chalk mining holes is unknown in the county – according to him, there could be hundreds which are currently lying undiscovered.

He told KoS: "They're quite widespread across the county, with the peak chalk mining activity around the 13th and 14th centuries. Some people will tell you that there are thousands, though I'd be a bit more conservative with my estimate and say it's more likely to be in the hundreds. The reality is though, we don't actually know really, and we don't have any idea where they are.

"They are only really likely to be discovered when eventually their cap fails, or someone stumbles across one."

However, according to Mr Farrar, there is good news for people panicking about their house sinking into one of the county's Deneholes.

"There isn't a real reason to worry too much about Deneholes, as the vast

majority of them were dug in very agricultural areas. Because of the chalk's primary use on the fields, you're unlikely to find many, if any in urban areas."

And the BGS says that it is working hard to make sure that no other unexpected chasms open up across the county.

Dr Banks said: "Currently, the BGS is going through historical maps and archives to database as many Deneholes as possible. Many locations are laid out on historical maps, but they have fallen off current maps. That means we are trying to update all known locations so that we can make sure they are protected.

"Sinkholes are also being investigated, although as they form naturally, they take a bit of modelling. We are currently working on susceptibility mapping to try and predict the areas which are likely to be most prone to them. In Kent, there are likely to be a number of areas which are susceptible to sinkholes forming because of the underlying geology."



# It is only in dark and desperate places we start to live life fully

In a special Easter message, written for the readers of Kent on Sunday, the Right Reverend Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Dover, writes about how we should cling on to the light amid the gloom of loss and despair and draw strength to continue when it feels like all hope has been extinguished.

By the Rt Rev Trevor Willmott

B

p

**M**OST of us, at some point in our lives, live through bleak and dark times.

These can be related to the death of loved ones, relationship break down, disability and illness, loss of a job, miscarriage of a baby, experience of poverty or injustice.

Sometimes these dark places are forced upon us, sometimes they arise because we have made poor decisions or transgressed in some way. Whatever the experience, the unifier is the suffering felt. This can manifest itself as depression, anxiety, anger, confusion and a feeling of hopelessness.

These last few days we have watched in horror at the suffering of the relatives of victims from the Germanwings plane crash. Thankful we are not one of their number, our hearts go out to these people. We wonder how the relatives will ever get over their loss.

Last week, I heard an interview with a young man who lost his parents in the 1999 EgyptAir crash which killed 217 people in Massachusetts; like the Germanwings disaster, the co-pilot appeared to manipulate the controls to bring the plane down.

The interviewee spoke of the grief he

suffered, his initial anger and depression.

This remarkably open young man went on to describe, how, as time passed, his suffering abated. He described how eventually he dwelt less on the tragedy and found he could laugh and joke about other areas of his life.

He was quick to point out that he would never forget his parents, that he could never think of the crash with anything less than horror, but that he had accepted what had happened and found a way to keep living. His life was not simply about surviving day by day, no, this young man was living his life to the full – he had a rewarding job, a successful marriage, a baby daughter whom he loved.

Is the message we take away from this solely that 'life is hard' so you'd better just crack on? Well, yes, life is hard, but I believe that it is only in these dark, desperate places that we start to actually live our life fully and deeply. It is only when we experience shadows that we can discern light.

After all if we lived forever, if we never suffered pain and disappointment, we could never take life seriously, never learn to love deeply – as the young man described. Until we reach the limits of our lives, understand that we cannot control everything, that we are not self-sufficient, we cannot feed from the sustaining 'living water' that God provides.

On Easter Monday, around 700 young people and their families will walk from all over Kent to converge at Canterbury Cathedral, for a service at noon. The young people come to celebrate Jesus' resurrection through worship, music and activity; it is a truly joyful occasion.

But it is only with the contrast of the bleakness of Lent and the despair of the events of Holy Week culminating with Jesus' death on Good Friday, that we can fully know the joy of Easter Sunday. Without the pain and the

darkness, light and joy is not possible.

The pilgrimage that the young people make through Kent on Easter Monday, reminds us of the two followers of Jesus who walked along the road to Emmaus, away from Jerusalem and the events surrounding Jesus' death. We read in Luke that the two disciples are crest-fallen. They have lost the person they loved most. As they do not yet believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, they feel their hope that Jesus was going to change the world is shattered.

They set out on their journey keen to get away. They have a purpose and destination in mind. But on the journey they encounter a stranger. They share their woes with this stranger. They ask their new companion to stop and eat with them. As the stranger breaks bread the disciples recognise Jesus is with them. They reflect "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). They turn back to Jerusalem to share the good news.

The disciples have fallen to the lowest place and suffered. In doing so they are open to a new answer, a new way of being and they find something they longed for. Their reward is the realisation that God is with them. Through Jesus, God has come to them with his unstoppable love, his unending compassion, his unfaltering forgiveness.

It might not feel like it at the time, but when we live through a dark and desperate time, we are not just changed, we are transformed. In our suffering God is there, pouring his love into us. God transforms us, so that we draw closer to him. The story of Jesus' resurrection which transforms our world on the very largest scale is played out inside each of us; the darkness always gives way to the new life of Easter. Jesus' story, is the story of our lives.

## CHURCH CONGREGATIONS SET TO SWELL

EASTER marks what is traditionally one of the busiest times in the Church's calendar.

Second only to Christmas in terms of congregation numbers, churches across the county will be throwing open their doors to welcome people in for the traditional services, with a special emphasis on family services.

In addition to local services (check your local place of worship for full details), there will be a number of significant events taking place as Holy Week reaches its pinnacle today (Sunday).

Among them will be services at the county's two historic cathedrals in Canterbury and Rochester.

Canterbury's services start with Holy Communion at 8am, followed by a service conducted by the archbishop, the Most Rev Justin Welby, at 11am.

Rochester Cathedral also starts with Holy Communion at 8am followed by the Palm Sunday procession and liturgy, featuring the full cathedral choir, at 10.30am.

For details of the Canterbury services see the website at [canterbury-cathedral.org](http://canterbury-cathedral.org).

For Rochester, see the site at [rochester-cathedral.org](http://rochester-cathedral.org).





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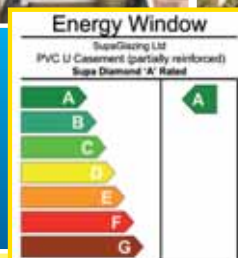
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**CAPITAL IDEA?** Fifty years on and many living in what are today officially called London

# Fifty years on: How London consumed slice of our county

Half a century ago, a shake-up in the way the capital governed itself saw the creation of 32 London boroughs; two of which had been part of Kent. **Chris Murphy** looks back at how we lost both Bromley and Bexley as a result.

**E**XACTLY 50 years ago on Wednesday, Kent saw one of the biggest land grabs in modern history as London took a big bite out of the north of the county.

It was not an easy pill to swallow, as the county bade farewell to Bromley and Bexley and saw them established as boroughs of Greater London.

They became free of Kent County Council control, cementing their geographical links with

the capital rather than the Garden of England. Yet half a century later, many who live there still consider themselves Kentish.

But how did this messy divorce come about – and why?

In the 1950s, concerns were mounting over the sheer number of local authorities that were fighting for representation as part of London's sprawl: county boroughs, municipal boroughs, metropolitan boroughs and urban districts.

It was so complicated trying to establish



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**HUB:** The London Assembly building (main pic) and, inset, the coat of arms of the London Borough of Bexley - formerly part of Kent

boroughs refuse to accept the fact and still refer to themselves as being Kentish

joined-up thinking and planning across so many authorities that it soon became obvious, as populations rapidly grew, that a far more streamlined solution was needed.

It 1957, the government finally knuckled down to the problem and a Royal Commission on Local Government in Great London was set up.

It was three more years before it finally finished its first report, but more tweaks were needed to cut the proposed 52 authorities down to the required 32.

The Royal Assent for the London Government Act was received in July 1963 in a bid to unify some of the constituent parts and create a new landscape for the capital.

It took a further two years before the Act became reality – fundamentally changing the look of both London and many of its surrounding counties.

The creation of the boroughs was no joke – despite their launch on April 1, 1965.

There were 32 new boroughs – including Bromley and Bexley – created as well as the City of London, with the over-riding requirement at the time that each needed to have pretty much the same population figures.

It meant those councils which previously looked to their county councils acquired new powers and autonomy, as well as benefiting from the clout of being part of Greater London.

Some, such as Bexley and Bromley, had already become municipal boroughs as they grew in the early 20th century. Bexley had clawed the power to manage its own education provision from Kent County Council after the war.

It would merge with Erith Municipal Borough, Crayford Urban District Council and Chislehurst & Sidcup Urban District Council to become the borough we know it as today.

It wasn't all one way traffic either. In 1969, Knockholt, in Bromley, moved itself back into Kent.

Bromley's growth had also been steady throughout the early 20th century.

Christine Hellicar, the journal editor at the Bromley History Society, said: "The formation of Borough 19 was agreed in May 1963. Bromley, Beckenham, Penge, Orpington and Chislehurst were to become the new borough. The A20 was the dividing line between Borough 19 and 18.

"Penge had wanted no change. Beckenham with a population of 75,000 and financially stable wished to become a council independent of Kent.

"Bromley had proposed a joint board of all five councils.

"Orpington proposed that, saying they should 'go it alone' or join with Sidcup and Chislehurst. Orpington's Liberal MP John Lubbock argued that it was growing faster than any other local area with a projected population of 200,000. Most of the country villages beyond the suburbs fought vigorously to remain in Kent.

"Orpington councillors also claimed that only three other local authorities – Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield would be larger than Borough 19.

"There was also division over the name, Orpington opted for Kentgate, Beckenham and Penge for Ravensbourne while Bromley and Chislehurst preferred Bromley. As there was no agreement Sir Keith Joseph chose the name Bromley in September 1963.

"Many Orpington people, whose families moved here in the first half of the 20th century still regret being part of Bromley, and that is a sentiment that I have heard expressed by Beckenham folk as well."

The mayor of Bromley, Julian Benington said: "There are some people on the Kent fringes of the borough feel they would have liked to have stayed with Kent, but overall, I think most people are happy with the way things have gone.

"There are advantages when it comes to travelling in London and it has been good for

**Turn to page 16**

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Continued from page 15  
local business."

As for Bexley, there was also a division of opinion. Sally Kirkpatrick, the chairman of the Bexley Historical Society, said: "There was a difference of opinion. Some of the older generations were not keen on any change, but others were delighted and saw it as a new start."

The society still considers itself part of Kent.

It said: "Until the coming of the railways, Bexley was composed of several large estates, farmland and small hamlets. These were gradually broken up and the rate of house-building peaked in the 1930s.

"Although suburban housing is the main feature of the district now, there are still many large open spaces, including Lesnes Abbey Woods, Erith Marshes and Foots Cray Meadows. There are four Grade I listed buildings in the borough of Bexley: Hall Place, Danson House, Red House and Crossness Pumping Station."

She added: "From speaking with local people, it seems no one has a good word to say about leaving Kent."

"I guess there was a bit of snobbery around, and people just didn't want to become part of London. They liked the idea of being more rural than that."

"But the councils at the time appear to have been lured by more money and were coming under government pressure to move in with other London boroughs, and so any opposition was silenced."

Bromley had become a municipal borough in 1903 and, after a major county review in the 1930s, grew wider when it incorporated some 2,000 acres from the disbanded

Bromley Rural District.

That was an area that included parts of the parishes of Farnborough, Hayes, Keston and West Wickham.

Mike Rawcliffe is the vice chairman of the Bromley Borough Local History Society. He said: "From a factual point of view, it cannot have been an easy process.

"Both Bromley and Bexley were already boroughs along with Penge and Orpington which were urban districts.

"To the south was the Green Belt which had enabled the rural district councils to retain their distinctive character as villages such as Cudham and Downe.

"The London borough would have stretched south to the North Downs if Knockholt had not decided to join Kent.

"Kent had lost other London boroughs in the nineteenth century, such as Greenwich. The north-west corner was contiguous with London, like Lewisham to the north."

Today, there seems little likelihood of more defections to Greater London - although many bordering districts in Kent are keen to embrace some of the benefits - most notably when it comes to plugging into the benefits of the London transport system.

Opinion remains mixed.

After we made a Facebook appeal for thoughts of Bexley leaving Kent, we received several replies

Carole Paterson said: "I remember my parents being very upset. Dad always insisted Bexley was Kent, he was Kentish, and he would never say London Borough of Bexley always just Bexley Council, and would never put LB Bexley on any form."

Keith Anderson added: "The gen-

eral feeling was that we were in Kent, so how could we be part of London."

And Sandy Hunt added: "We hated the idea! We are Kentish... and ever more will be so!"

**What do you think? Do you live in the boroughs and still consider yourself Kentish? Do you think Kent was diluted by losing such key areas to London?**

**Share your views and join the debate. Write to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email [editorial@kos-media.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kos-media.co.uk).**

## GOODBYE GLC, HELLO GLA

AFTER the creation of the boroughs, elections were held on May 7 1964, with the new councils acting as shadow authorities before growing their teeth the following year and able to take their own decisions.

Of course, there is nothing simple about politics, and so between 1965 and 1986 the boroughs looked up to the Greater London Council which had enormous power over them and looked after things like the emergency services and floods.

The boroughs had social care, libraries, cemeteries and refuse collection.

With Labour's Ken Livingstone in control, the GLC found itself locking horns with the Conservative government of the time, led by Margaret Thatcher.

It ultimately led to the GLC being scrapped and power spread among the boroughs.

Over the years, other small changes happened, like Hammersmith becoming Hammersmith and Fulham, while Barking and Dagenham teamed up in 1980 - using two names for one borough was something the original Royal Commission was extra keen to avoid.

To pre-empt further possible

problems, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England takes an occasional look at the geography of the boroughs with an eye to making more adjustments, which are generally greeted with dismay by some groups.

As a nod to the old GLC, the Greater London Authority was set up in 2000, with the Mayor of London (under the eye of the London Assembly) taking on limited but major responsibilities like highways and planning.

Of course, it still consults with the boroughs, but remains all-powerful.



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**HEALTHCARE:** Likely to be a big issue in Gillingham and Rainham

# Bitter rivals to slug it out in grudge match

**Jamie Weir** continues our guide to all of our constituencies

**T**HE Gillingham and Rainham constituency is the tale of two halves. Despite being so close to London, the area has failed to attract similar levels of inward investment and remains a sprawling urban conurbation.

At the same time, it was once an area which commanded significant respect, with military might built and shipped out from Chatham Dockyard, part of which is within the constituency boundary, until its closure.

The docks themselves have undergone a transformation in recent years, with regeneration efforts focused on bringing housing and business to the area.

But Gillingham town centre, on the other hand, has been left with little cash to attract business interests and bring the area back to life.

Politically, the constituency is a tale of two parties too, with the main

candidates both well known to the electorate and nursing a bitter rivalry.

In the red corner, Gillingham and Rainham's former MP Paul Clark for the Labour Party, while in the blue corner, the sitting MP for the Conservative Party, and Mr Clark's former protégé, Rehman Chishti.

One of the key swing seats in the county, and unlike most Kent constituencies, one which has seen a Labour MP within the last decade, it will be something of a barometer for the national mood, helping to indicate which way the country will fall come May 8.

Mr Chishti says it is business as usual, with the economic recovery, the NHS and housing all making his highlights list of pledges to the electorate.

Historically, the seat has gone to the party which has subsequently formed the government, echoing the result in every general election since 1979.

The forthcoming fight looks as though it will be much the same.

Not just a key battleground for the parties, but also a key personal battleground, after Mr Chishti defected from Labour in 2005, attracting accusations of being a so-called career politician, beating his former mentor Mr Clark, and taking his seat from him at the 2010 election.

That alone has caused animosity between the two, and some say, has spurred Mr Clark on to come back.

He has, after all, got something to prove now.

Mr Clark rode to victory first in 1997 on the back of New Labour's prowess. The years weren't kind to his majority though, and by 2005 he

was sitting on one of the most wafer thin majorities the county has ever seen, banking his place in Parliament with just a 0.6 per cent swing in his favour.

When Mr Chishti won in 2010, it was in convincing style, with a solid majority of close to 20 per cent.

But can he hold onto that kind of majority, after five years of austerity and swingeing cuts in an area which already has significant pockets of deprivation?

Ukip, as ever, is likely to play a key role. It won't win, but it could split the right wing vote sufficiently to erode Mr Chishti's majority and allow Mr Clark to gain ground. Yet it's a big 'if'.

Mr Clark told KoS that he sensed his old ally was on the run, saying that he was confident he would be able to take the seat from the Tory MP.

He said: "There's no question across the length and breadth of the constituency that many people are sick and tired of this government, and this MP.

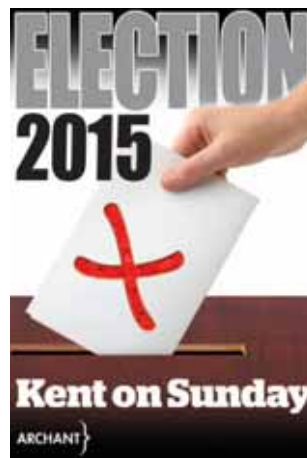
"From my time talking to constituents on the doorstep, I can say with certainty that people want to see change, and they believe that it's all to fight for at this election.

"Ukip are certainly taking a chunk of the Tory vote, and that will have an impact on the Conservatives in this constituency."

However, the win is far from in the bag for Mr Clark. One thing which could have contributed to Mr Clark's 2010 defeat was the redrawn boundary.

When tweaked just before the 2010 election, it drew more affluent pockets into the constituency.

Rainham, Hempstead and Wig-



more – undoubtedly the better off parts of Medway – were dragged into the new constituency, creating an altered, and perhaps, more Tory demographic for the election.

Green candidate, Neil Williams said that it didn't matter whether voters were well off or not, telling KoS that the electorate – rich or poor – all had one overriding issue.

He said: "People here feel utterly let down by their MP. He has totally failed to actually represent what people want, and what they believe in.

"Local issues are ignored by him, and he just votes on party lines."

That's something which Liberal Democrat candidate Paul Chaplin agrees with, saying that one big issue is the local hospital.

He told KoS: "The Medway Maritime situation is shocking. It has been in special measures for far too long, and one of the reasons for that is the local MP just doesn't seem to understand the issues.

"He doesn't even seem to campaign for it locally. That shows just how little he cares about it."

Sitting MP Mr Chishti, who didn't wish to speak to KoS directly, instead issued a statement saying this was incorrect, and that he was working hard to help the hospital.

He said: "I will ensure that Medway continues to get the support it needs to provide excellent care. I have been campaigning for extra funding and we have seen £13.4 million invested

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Gillingham and Rainham:

**2010**  
 Rehman Chishti (Con) 21,624 (46.2%)  
 Paul Clark (Lab) 12,944 (27.7%)  
 Andrew Stamp (Lib Dem) 8,484 (18.1%)  
 Robert Oakley (Ukip) 1,515 (3.2%)  
 Brian Ravenscroft (BNP) 1,149 (2.5%)  
 Dean Lacey (Eng Dem) 464 (1.0%)  
 Trish Marchant (Green) 356 (0.8%)  
 Gordon Bryan (Ind) 141 (0.3%)  
 George Meegan (Medway Independent Party) 109 (0.2%)  
**Majority: 8,680 (18.6 per cent)**

**2005**  
 Paul Clark (Lab) 18,621 (41.2%)  
 Tim Butcher (Con) 18,367 (40.7%)  
 Andrew Stamp (Lib Dem) 6,734 (14.9%)  
 Craig Mackinlay (Ukip) 1,191 (2.6%)  
 Gordon Bryan (Ind) 254 (0.6%)  
**Majority: 254 (0.6%)**

[Constituency formerly known as Gillingham in 2005]



**CHISHTI:**  
 Focused on the seat



**COMEBACK:** Clark wants a win  
 kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk

KEA

Continued on Page 20

Week ending April 5, 2015 19



in Medway hospital's A&E along with more doctors and nurses."

The Tory MP said that the long-term economic plan was resulting in more cash going to hard hit hospitals.

The NHS could prove to be a big ticket election item, both nationally and in hard-hit Gillingham and Rainham, where the hospital has struggled for some time.

Mr Clark told KoS that the era of austerity in the NHS and other public sector services was likely to push voters in Labour's direction.

He said: "It has become more and more obvious to everyone that we are not all in this together, despite government using that as something of a slogan. Living standards across the country, and Chatham and Rainham have been steadily decreasing for people.

"One woman I met while campaigning told me how she's working two jobs, not claiming benefits, but still struggling to make ends meet. She said to me that now she's getting concerned about how she'll pay her mortgage.

"The majority of people are working hard, but they're getting steadily worse off under this Tory parliament."

Public service cuts are something which the Trade Union Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is against, with candidate Jacqui Berry telling KoS it is the only party that would stop the austerity programme fully.

Ms Berry said: "The creeping privatisation of the NHS, along with other public sector bodies has to stop. Cuts across the board and the lack of cash

## KOS PREDICTS...



ONE thing which can be guaranteed is that this seat will be one of the most hardest fought in the country.

If Ukip are successful, the party could whittle down the Tory majority to such an extent that it may well give Labour a win. That, though, is a big if. It's unlikely any other party will be in the running, so it'll be down to the wire between these two bitter rivals in what will be a fascinating battle.

for key public services have led to serious failings in many areas. TUSC is committed to standing up against austerity. Housing, banking, energy and transport are broken. We would re-nationalise them all."

She told KoS that since meeting the other candidates, she wanted to win more, saying she was extremely disillusioned by the main parties' policies.

# Housing, travel and health at top of list

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**A**CROSS the area the lack of genuinely affordable housing is a growing issue for many. In Bexleyheath and Crayford, the topic could prove to be one of the key issues come polling day.

As with many northerly Kent/south London constituencies, in incumbent David Evennett's seat, 'generation rent' is starting to lose patience with the lack of truly affordable housing.

The Ukip candidate for the constituency, Chris Attard, says that he be-



**CONSERVATIVE:** Can David Evennett secure another term?

## CANDIDATES

### Full list of confirmed candidates:

Maggi Young (Eng Dem)  
**Richard Davis (Lib Dem)**  
 Stella Gardiner (Green)  
**David Evennett (Con)**  
 Chris Attard (Ukip)  
**Stefano Borella (Lab)**

lieves that people priced out of the housing market are beginning to demand change.

He said: "There are thousands of new properties being built all over the borough; unfortunately the vast majority are for sale and not social housing.

"This government has to get to grips with the fact that if more social housing was built, along with reductions in private rents, this would not only get more people out to work but reduce our benefits bill by a huge amount.

"Why should so many hard working taxpayers pay for private landlords to buy their houses?"

Mr Evennett says that, while it is a big issue, housebuilding is taking place and is a priority for not only him, but also the Mayor of London.

He told KoS: "The council has done a good job in getting new, affordable housing built. It is still an issue, but there is a commitment from the mayor to get more built, and the council are also doing the right thing by helping new development along.

"We don't want development on greenfield sites, but for brownfield areas like the old Crayford town hall, there have been some good developments taking place already."

Stefano Borella, Labour's candidate in the constituency, says that is not the case, with many not only struggling to get on the housing ladder, but also to simply rent.

He told KoS: "We've got to build more housing, and it needs to be the right type – social housing, council housing and genuinely affordable housing. There are 30-year-olds still living with their parents because rent is no longer affordable for them, while homeless people in the area are being sent to Bolton and Manchester because there's no housing available for them."

Labour could well steal the election in Bexleyheath and Crayford, especially if the Conservative vote is split, or dissatisfaction with austerity begins to bubble over.

Mr Borella is measured about his chances, telling KoS: "There's a big

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## KOS PREDICTS...

IT'S going to be a two-horse race between Labour and the Conservatives in this seat.

But, once again, it will be the slice of the vote taken by the minor parties which will determine the winner.

However, given the Tory lead it will need its vote to take a big knock for David Evennett to not be heading back to Westminster after May 7.



Tory majority at the moment, but this is a seat we've held in recent past, and I think we can get back."

Another big topic Labour and Ukup agree on is austerity, with both candidates saying enough is enough.

Mr Attard said: "My wife is a carer in and around the borough and I have been fortunate enough to meet some of her clients. I have listened to their fears and concerns in an uncertain future with so many austerity cuts.

"We should be giving carers more time to spend with the elderly and not the usual in and out, 15 minute dash before they have to get to the next client."

Mr Evennett says that while care is a big issue, healthcare for all is likely to be the critical piece of policy when voters come to make their choice this May.

He told KoS: "The NHS is the critical issue, with big challenges faced by the local hospital and in the local health service.

"It impacts all constituents, young or old, and that's why I'm intending to

**REGENERATION:** David Evennett says much has been done, but more is still needed in Bexleyheath

help make the NHS work for everyone."

As part of the commuter belt, the area has a large number of voters who make a daily pilgrimage to work in the city - something which hasn't been easy according to the sitting MP.

Mr Evennett says he intends to take aim at train operator Southeastern if

he's re-elected, pledging to ask difficult questions of the company.

He said: "The rail services, which so many of my constituents use, are absolutely appalling with Southeastern at the helm.

"It has been a big problem for some time now, with commuters being left stranded with reliability problems,

failures to communicate issues with passengers and simply poor service by the company."

Mr Borella agrees that something needs to be done, but he takes aim at fare prices.

He said: "Commuters who have to work in London are being squeezed, and I want to see it stopped."

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Bexleyheath and Crayley

#### 2010

David Evennett (Con) 21,794 (50.5%)  
Howard Dawber (Lab) 11,450 (26.5%)  
Karelia Scott (Lib Dem) 5,502 (12.7%)  
Stephen James (BNP) 2,042 (4.7%)  
John Dunford (Ukip) 1,557 (3.6%)  
John Griffiths (Eng Dem) 466 (1.1%)  
Adrian Ross (Green) 371 (0.9%)  
**Majority: 10,344 (24%)**

#### 2005

David Evennett (Con) 19,722 (46.3%)  
Nigel Beard (Lab) 15,171 (35.6%)  
David Raval (Lib Dem) 5,144 (12.1%)  
John Dunford (Ukip) 1,302 (3.1%)  
Jay Lee (BNP) 1,245 (2.9%)  
**Majority: 4,551 (10.7%)**



**UKIP:** Chris Attard hopes for votes

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# Remembering the remarkable life and times of Dave the Dolphin

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of when thousands flocked to the south coast hoping to catch a glimpse of a lone dolphin as it swam and jumped for all to see. **Molly Kersey** takes a look back

**T**HE fertile waters of the English Channel have long delivered a rich bounty of sealife - but perhaps none more dramatic or magical than the visit of Dave the Dolphin.

Dave, or Davina as she was renamed when someone realised he was in fact a she, was no blink and you'll miss them visitor.

Because for some 18 months nearly ten years ago Dave - let's keep calling her that for ease - frolicked in the waters off the coast of Sandgate near Folkestone.

Such a familiar site was she that visitors would head down to the shingle beach to witness her swimming and diving along the seafront - an ideal tourist attraction she even seemed to stay in a zone just a few hundred metres long and two kilometres wide.

Some even joined her, swimming out to her, or paddling up in kayaks and boats - despite repeated warnings to not swim too close.

And all these years later, her time in the county, and sudden disappearance, remains a talking point.

Lyn Griffiths, Kent co-ordinator of marine mammals rescue organisation British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMRL), helped to keep Dave safe during the stay.

She said: "I joined in April 2006 and a month later Dave turned up. She arrived as a wild dolphin who was wary of people. When people were out in kayaks she tended to move away, but by the time she disappeared she was what we call a 'stage five' habituated dolphin and if people came into the water she came to them.

"I would say the greatest portion of her time was spent off Sandgate."

Although dolphins have been seen on the Kent coast before, it was still unusual for one to turn up alone - let alone stay for so long.

Ms Griffiths added: "They are normally out in pods so we have no idea how she became separated from her pod. It was thought that she was probably a juvenile heading towards puberty, that kind of age.

"I have never seen large numbers down our way, but that doesn't mean they haven't passed through the Channel. We ask people not to ap-

proach them and to let them be, to observe them from a distance if they are on a boat."

During her stay visitor numbers were regularly swollen as people came down to the beach hoping for a glimpse.

Martin Harper, who worked at the ice cream kiosk in Seabrook during the summer Dave was in town, saw the dolphin numerous times.

He said: "It was incredibly busy. There would be queues of up to half an hour, there were queues around the block sometimes.

"People loved talking about it. One even asked what time was the show - that's how often she would come out and perform."

"She was certainly very popular," added Terry Whittaker, a photographer who has lived on the Esplanade in Sandgate for some 15 years.

He documented Dave's stay from the beginning, updating his website with news about the dolphin.

"A lot of the local people went to see her and a lot of people from outside the town did too.

"I suppose it got some people inter-



**VISIT:** Dave was a popular sight. Pic: Terry Whittaker/terrywhittaker.com

ested in dolphins and mammals, who might not otherwise have seen one. A bottle nose dolphin is not something you see often in that area.

"I was quite interested in mammals and dolphins anyway. I worked with killer whales in the past and photographed them. Then one turned up on my doorstep - what's not to love?"

The leader of Shepway District

Council, David Monk, says that the dolphin's stay did a great deal for the town.

He told KoS: "Dave attracted hundreds of extra tourists to the town and gave local tourism a real boost. It gave people another reason to come here."

But after picking up some injuries (see box), Dave disappeared from our shoreline as swiftly as she had

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**MYSTERY:** Quite what happened to Dave remains unknown. Pic: Terry Whittaker/terrywhittaker.com

appeared. There have been no confirmed sightings of her since. "We have no idea where she went," Ms Griffiths of the BDMLR explained. "We did have reports from people who look out for that sort of thing in Holland, they thought they had seen her over there but we never had any photographs from them, so could never say 'yes, that's Dave'.

"We never had any photographic proof they had seen her over there, we know her markings well. "She did disappear for a couple of weeks and then came back. We went quite extensively up the coast tracking her, I lived in Folkestone at the time and she ended up mainly down near Hythe for the last few months. "We had no other reports when she

disappeared, she wasn't spotted anywhere else." Did you see Dave during her stay here? Do you have special memories of her visit? Why not share your memories with us? Write in to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.



**LEAP:** Dave off the Sandgate coast. Pic: Terry Whittaker/terrywhittaker.com

## GETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

SADLY, people's attraction to her didn't always work out so well for Dave.

There were times when people got a little too close for comfort and put the dolphin in danger.

"It got a little bit more dangerous when people took jet skis out," Martin Harper who worked by the beach at Sandgate remembers.

Two men were charged and fined under the Wildlife and Countryside Act after taking a drunken dip and disturbing the dolphin, during which they touched and stroked her and witnesses worried she was being caused distress.

"There was an issue all the way through with the dolphin being there, whether it was right or wrong

for people to swim with her, but there was never any chance that they were going to stop people interacting with her," photographer Terry Whittaker said.

Dave received an injury to her dorsal fin in August 2007 and in October of the same year lost a third of her tail.

The BDMLR raced to save her, with a vet administering antibiotics. But while there were rumours circulating that Dave had been struck by a jet ski, leading to the injury, Ms Griffiths doesn't believe this to be the case.

"She did have an injury to her tail flute. The belief from the vet was that it was caused by a fishing line."

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# Digging to find a king beneath football pitch

Historians want to complete work to reveal the grave of King Stephen. **Chris Murphy** reports

A GROUP of archaeologists want to dig up a school playing field in the hunt to find the royal remains of an ancient king.

It is claimed the king, who died in 1154 in Faversham, was buried beneath what is now the playing fields of in-demand grammar school the Queen Elizabeth in the remains of a buried 'royal abbey'.

Originally discovered back in 1965, archaeologists were forced to leave the site with its work unfinished because a housing estate was due to go up.

But plans changed, the homes were never built, and the area became a football field for the school.

The original 1960s find was made by Dr Brian Philp and his team and his interest in the site was piqued once more by the discovering of another king under a car park.

He told us this week: "With all the interest in Richard III, Kent archaeologists have reviewed the burial of King Stephen in 1154 at Faversham."

The director of the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit said he led the team which discovered the abbey at Faversham back in the 1960s.

The first aim was to locate the missing abbey church, but the second was to discover the burial vaults of King Stephen, Queen Matilda and Prince Eustace, recorded as buried in them.

King Stephen was a grandson of William the Conqueror and sat on the throne between 1135 to his death 19 years later.

He passed away after falling ill with a stomach disorder while travelling to Dover for a meeting. He died at the local priory before being buried at Faversham Abbey.

He was succeeded by Henry II, the first of the Angevin kings, the royal house which preceded the Plantagenets – the final ruler of which was Richard III.

The abbey had been totally destroyed around 1540 as part of the dissolution or the monasteries organised by Henry VIII – a move designed to generate money for the crown and loosen the power of the Pope.

The archaeologist told us the church and its many domestic buildings formed a great monastic abbey. Its abbots sat in parliament on many occasions.

And it clearly resonated with King Stephen. Faversham's strategic role with its tidal creek made it well placed.

So he decided the abbey would house his royal mausoleum - a 80ft by 26ft chamber - where he envisaged not only his family being laid to rest, but also future kings and queens of England too.

However, his son Eustace died before him and the new line of kings preferred Westminster Abbey and eventually Windsor.

Dr Philp from the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit said: "We spent eight weeks of non-stop excavation in freezing weather conditions and established the church was over 360ft in length. The excavations were carried out urgently just ahead of proposed developments to a very tight time schedule."



**SNOW:** But outline of historic site is clearly seen during original dig



**PITCH:** This area is now covered in fields

"The weather was severe and it snowed frequently. However, such were the discoveries that we were able to bury the great church under another two feet of soil and re-design the proposed playing field to protect it."

Dr Philp re-visited the site recently and located those burial locations once more.

Dr Philp said: "I have now re-located the site of the royal vaults."

"Originally when we were there in the 1960s, we did not find any human bones, but then again vaults were not fully excavated because we ran out of time."

"I would like to return to the site properly and unearth the vaults completely and examine all the contents. We only need to find a few bones, and see if we can get some DNA work done to trace the royal bloodline to today. I don't know if that's possible, given the time frame, but it would be interesting to find out."

"On a more permanent note, we now need to commemorate the royal burials with a ceremony and a permanent plaque."

"After all, Stephen as buried 330 years before Richard III and certainly not in a car-park."





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KOS/15



# Dickens museum at his former home still 'years away'

Fans of the famous author waiting for his Gad's Hill Place home to open fully to the public have a while longer to wait

**P**LANS to transform the home of the writer Charles Dickens into a major tourist venue could still be "five or six years away" according to the team behind the project.

One of the most influential writers in British history lived for many years at Gad's Hill Place, in Higham, near Rochester, his home until his death in 1870.

For many years, the house has been home to the independent Gad's Hill School, which saw Dickens' famous study become the headmaster's office, and the room in which he died, the school cafeteria.

But two years ago it was confirmed the school was moving into purpose built buildings next door – and the house would be vacated and turned into a museum.

However, in the week that the desk at which Dickens wrote *Great Expectations* at his Kent home was bought for the nation for £780,000 (see box), hopes of his former family home being ready to welcome visitors every day seem a little way off.

There have been tours of some of the house for the past three years, but only at weekends because students are still using much of the building, including the upstairs of the Grade I listed building.

The Dickens volunteers now have to patiently wait for the second phase of the school to be built, so all the students can move out.

The writer's great, great granddaughter Marion Dickens said the centre won't be completely finished for five or six years.

She told us: "This is a long term project and is now about half finished. Half of the children have moved out of the school and any more work is now dependent on the school being finished.

"It's all a question of funding and this all needs time. We cannot create a Dickens heritage centre that is open to the public six days a week while there are still children there. But it will happen and it is open currently from April to September at weekends.

"The downstairs is the most Dick-



**HOME:** Gad's Hill Place above, was the family home of the Dickens family and, more recently, a top independent school. Dickens at his desk below.



ensian – it included his study, the sitting room, dining room, what used to be the billiard room, the conservatory and hall are now pretty much empty of desks, chairs and children, so you can have a tour of those rooms. But access is still fairly limited.

"The house of Charles Dickens, in time, will be open to the public in a way it never has been since he died. And that will be another five or six years, at least.

"We have no idea what sort of visitor figures there will be, but it should be popular as he still has an amazing following."

Sadly, most of the writer's possessions are not at the house.

Marion Dickens told us: "When Dickens died and the house was sold, the contents, desks, furniture, all

sorts of possession, were dispersed.

"Gad's Hill does not possess any of the pieces of furniture that were originally in the house at the time.

"It would be absolutely fabulous if the house and original furniture could be reunited. That would be wonderful."

Steve Martin, the secretary of the Rochester branch of the Dickens Fellowship, is a voluntary tour guide.

He said: "There is plenty to see and it's very enlightening."

Gad's Hill place was built in 1780 by local brewer Thomas Stevens, and Charles Dickens first admired the house in 1817 when he was only five.

Leading tour guide Jennifer Ide, said: "He would often walk past with his father, John who would tell his son that if he worked

hard, one day it could be his."

By 1855, Dickens was famous and living at Tavistock House, London. Gad's Hill Place came onto the market for £2,000 and in spite of legal advice that it was too expensive, Dickens snapped it up for £1,790. And it was there he wrote some of his best known works – much of it on the top floor of his Swiss chalet, built in the house's grounds.

Books written there included *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Our Mutual Friend* and the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He died, on June 9, 1870, before completing the book.

The chalet has been preserved and was moved to the Dickens Centre in Rochester High Street as a memorial to the writer.



**HISTORY:** The author (right, smoking) outside Gad's Hill Place

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Ms Ides said: "His study there is still

much as it was as subsequent owners have been mindful of the heritage and have endeavoured in particular to keep the study as it was.

"However, his desk is 'missing' and a faithful replica is shown to visitors today.

"He loved to entertain and visitors were frequent. If the house was full he would put up some of the visitors at the Sir John Falstaff Inn across the road, which is still there."

A spokesman for the school said: "Our junior school is already open and we plan to have the senior school, the second phase, built and up and running by the early 2020s.

"But until the second phase of the school's building plans are realised it still requires the use of a small number of rooms."

## AUTHOR'S DESK HITS GREAT EXPECTATIONS AS IT IS SECURED FOR THE NATION

WHEN Charles Dickens died in 1870, he suffered a stroke on June 8 after a day writing the *Mystery of Edwin Drood* and died the following day, his belongings were dispersed among family and friends.

His Higham home passed to his son - Charles Dickens Junior - but slipped out of the family's owner-

ship in 1879 when he was forced to give it up due to his own ill health.

Among the items passed to family and friends were his writing desk and chair - captured, famously, in two paintings of the author.

They eventually were auctioned off in 2004 for the Great Ormond Street Charitable Trust and it

moved into private ownership.

Recently, however, courtesy of a £780,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the desk was snapped up for the Charles Dickens Museum in London.

It will put the desk on display at his former London home.

Robert Moye, director of the

Charles Dickens Museum, said:

"We are delighted to have been able to acquire Charles Dickens' iconic writing desk and chair for permanent display in his study at 48 Doughty Street.

"They hold a unique place in our literary heritage."

The chair and desk were once in

the Swiss chalet which Dickens used to write much of his work during his time at Gad's Hill Place.

Built on stilts, on the opposite side of the road to his home, he later had a tunnel built under the road to allow him to access it more easily. It was there he would spend the day, working on his latest book.



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**PROGRESS:** How the UTC will look when complete (main picture) and a work in progress (right, insets)



# Engineering a building designed to empower a future generation

Work on the £10m Medway University Technical College is well advanced and demand for places has been strong. **Molly Kersey** provides an update on the progress of a fresh face in the education mix...

**W**HEN September arrives, so will the dawn of a new strand of secondary education in the county as its first ever University Technical College (UTC) welcomes its initial intake.

And, fittingly, the innovative concept will be at the heart of an ongoing regeneration of an area which remains synonymous with

its maritime engineering past.

Medway was shaped around its naval past and the dockyard at Chatham was the hub of activity and employment for generations, until its closure in the 1980s.

While the towns continue to rebuild, the UTC will hark back to the skill set which once made the area its fortune.

The UTCs are a new breed of Government-funded schools. Already 30 around the UK are open and another 20 will be open by 2016. They offer 14 to 18-year-olds a regular curriculum joined by technical and scientific subjects in a bid to breed the inventors, engineers, scientists and technicians of tomorrow.

Work has long since started on the site at Chatham Waters – perhaps fittingly one of the key areas of the fresh development.

Although there have been a few hiccups along the way, with an initial bid to open a UTC in 2012 proving unsuccessful, the Government confirmed it would provide funds to buy the site for the £10m school earlier this year.

The UTC already has the backing of establishments including the University of Greenwich, MidKent College and Medway Council – forming a further piece of the educational jigsaw serving the towns.

Business partners including Deane Construction and the Royal School of Military Engineers are also on board.

Vice principal Kieron Walsh said he was delighted at how it was shaping up.

He told KoS: “It’s going very, very well. I think in the Medway area there is a history of engineering but a link in the chain has got of broken and we are trying to give our students the opportunity and the skills to fix it and realise their engineering dreams.

“It’s a part of developing and securing the future of the Medway area be-

cause businesses need skilled, employable young men and women to stay in those areas.

“We have met grandparents and parents who are engineers who wanted their children to follow in their footsteps but felt that they weren’t being prepared for that. They feel that Medway UTC gives them that opportunity they didn’t think they could have.”

And the numbers for the new school are looking strong.

“When the school is fully grown it will have 600 students, 150 in each year group,” explained Mr Walsh.

“That way we can offer that personal support and mentorship.

“We are hoping now students have got their places they will start to share their excitement with their peers and spread the word.”

The building is scheduled to open in August, with students arriving on September 7.

Mr Walsh is optimistic about the challenge that lies ahead.

He said: “We appreciate it’s a really big leap of faith for parents and students to apply for a school that hasn’t been built yet and isn’t fully staffed. We are in the process of appointing some fantastic staff.

“We are well aware of the successes and failures of previous generations of UTCs and we are developing our curriculum with our partners to develop a new approach to education.”

Students in Year 10 and 12 will study GCSEs and A levels alongside the technical specialisms.

Mr Walsh says the curriculum will give students the chance to develop the employability skills that businesses have been asking for.

“It’s giving the opportunities and experiences to actually develop those skills,” he said.

“We want our students to have excellent qualifications but also have de-

monstrable employability abilities as well.”

He added: “Our partners have said that they want our students to have good communication skills, so that could encompass debating and looking at ethics so our students have a more rounded understanding of the workplace and how that affects the wider community.

“We want the UTC to be a part of the community. It’s making sure that the dreams and aspirations of the people in Medway who want to become engineers can become realised.”

So where do the business partners fit in to all this?

“They very much want to be a part of it, giving opportunities, supporting the students, with visitors and people coming in and sharing ideas. It’s trying to make it real world and relevant,” he said.

Work experiences opportunities will also be available for the students studying at the UTC.

“It’s very much two ways. The partners are giving us support but the need for them is that they want to develop and want young people to be work ready to secure their future in the Medway area,” explained Mr Walsh.

“It’s also networking, and that’s an unbelievable opportunity. That’s something that engineering graduates are now wishing they had.”

Mike O’Brien, Medway Council’s cabinet member for further education, said: “It’s taking shape before our eyes every day.

“The numbers are looking exceptionally strong and it’s a really exciting offering for the young people that don’t want to pursue an academic career but want to pursue an engineering or construction future.”

“It just broadens the educational offering that we have here in Medway.”







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# Proud dad pens book as daughter beats cancer

When young Millie was diagnosed with brain cancer, her parents were terrified. Now, her father has written a book about her bravery. **Molly Kersey** speaks to the family after her recovery

**Y**OUR child getting ill is any parent's worst nightmare. So when eight-year-old Millie Previero was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer after losing her sight, her parents were devastated.

But the brave girl battled the odds and, with the help of specialists at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital and proton beam therapy, is now in complete remission.

Now Millie, who lives in Tunbridge Wells with parents Vanessa and Marco and siblings Luca Jack and Ellie Rose, is starting to rebuild her life.

What's more, her father has written a book about her inspirational courage and determination – a story he hopes she can read for herself when she gets older.

The book is based on a poignant diary Mr Previero kept and which he first started writing which Millie was initially diagnosed.

He told KoS: "For the first three or four days you enter a world you don't understand at all.

"I was taking notes for the first week, to make sense of all the things that were happening, and the terminology that people used.

"Then I thought 'I could write this in much more detail so I could share it with Millie later in life'. She was only seven-years-old, and God knows what she would have felt at the time. I wanted to share it with her so she can really understand her story.

"I am not a writer, I am an accountant. I only write spreadsheets.

"My main objective for the book was really for Millie. I was keen for

her to hear my voice when she read it, with all its imperfections. English is my third language, so it's not Henry James. So I went down a self-publishing route.

"The introduction is a letter to Millie from me, so that's why we decided on Dear Millie as a title."

He said that writing the book had helped with the difficult emotions he was feeling at the time too.

"Externalising the fear and the angst helped me a great deal," he explained.

Dear Millie is being released in support of the Great Ormond Street Children's Charity and aims to help others experiencing a similar trauma.

"If it helps one more family who is going through it at the moment then all the better," said Mr Previero.

Millie's ordeal began in April 2013, when she lost complete vision in her right eye and most in her left one.

Her parents rushed her to a paediatrician and an MRI scan revealed a tumour "the size of a golf ball" resting on the base of her skull, deep in the central region of her brain.

"In the months prior to the diagnosis, Millie had seemed absolutely fine. The only symptoms were occasional headaches and thirst, which we were in the process of investigating," said Mr Previero.

"So the family was in a complete state of shock when the scan revealed the tumour. We were terrified."

Millie was transferred to Great Ormond Street Hospital where a team of neurosurgeons did everything they could to preserve the vision that she had, performing a high risk cranioto-



**INSPIRATIONAL:** Millie's father has written a book which she can read when she is older to help her understand.

my – when part of the skull is cut away to expose the brain – to remove the part of the tumour that was putting pressure on Millie's optic nerves.

The surgery was a success, but doctors warned that her survival rate was only 65 per cent.

During the next few months, Millie endured two further brain operations, four sessions of chemotherapy and 30 sessions of radiotherapy.

Mr Previero writes about these different stages in the book.

He took inspiration from his Italian heritage, and there are elements of epic poem the Divine Comedy included in his writing.

"It's in three parts – chemotherapy, operations and proton therapy," Mr Previero explained.

"It has Divine Comedy elements as undertones to it, with Millie as the main protagonist. Cancer diagnosis and the first operation is Hell, chemotherapy is Purgatory and proton therapy is Heaven."

Proton beam therapy was thrown into the national spotlight after the high-profile case of Ashya King, whose parents took him from a hospital in Southampton to Spain, where they funded the treatment.

While proton beam therapy is not appropriate for all children with cancer, in those that it is beneficial for it is non-invasive and painless.

The therapy was used to irradiate the tumour bed, aiming to destroy any remaining cancerous cells and prevent others from developing.

Millie was treated at the ProCure Proton Therapy Center in Oklahoma, in the US, one of three such facilities worldwide that has a relationship with the NHS.

Mr Previero said: "We all went as a family, so it was a very positive experience in that sense. My other two children and Millie attended an American school.

"It's a more targeted therapy with less collateral damage, but no different to radiotherapy in terms of local control."

Thankfully, Millie has been in complete remission since November 2013. She will be monitored for the next few years before being given the all clear, and still takes medication.

"Millie's doing very well. Obviously it's a work in progress," Mr Previero explained.

"She's back at school full time which is really good and she's regain-

ing energy and stamina. She's enjoying being back there and she has regained full functional vision.

"She can see very well which I think is very positive for her. It's one thing to live your life in the aftermath of cancer with vision, but quite another to do it without."

Millie said: "I'm really happy to be well again. When I was sick I missed my friends but now I'm back at school and can see them everyday.

"I love netball and was scared that I wouldn't be able to play it anymore, but now my eyes are better I can."

And the family are recovering well.

Mr Previero said: "It was tough, and it's the worst news you could possibly have, but we were lucky and through it we have met a huge number of strangers who helped us through the last couple of years.

"It was helpful in revealing a different side of human nature that you don't always encounter in life. You realise there are so many other children who are going through significantly worse treatments. It's a very humbling thing to happen to you. I think we will live a better life as a result."

You can buy copies of Dear Millie from Amazon. Copies cost £9.99.







# Will sport of kings ever return to historic Westenhanger track?

With the Grand National next week, **Jamie Weir** looks at the future of the county's only racecourse

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**BUCKMORE PARK**

**A**NY hopes of an imminent return of horseracing to Folkestone Racecourse seems unlikely with the circuit still apparently stuck in a catch 22 scenario.

Closed in December 2012, the county's last remaining top flight course – just off the A20 at Westenhanger – regularly attracted thousands of fans to watch the sport's big names do battle.

But its facilities began to flag behind those of rival courses and, as a consequence, it failed to generate the necessary revenues streams to allow it to survive.

The solution – to sell a large tract of the site for housing development with proceeds then being used to finance the building work – failed to get the go ahead, and, as a result, the course spends much of the year deserted.

And that leaves race fans, currently building up excitement for next weekend's Grand National, wondering just when they will once again be able to watch the 'sport of kings' in the county again.

"At the moment there are no plans to host horseracing at Folkestone racecourse," a spokesman for track owner Arena Racing Company told KoS. "I know this will be a disappointing answer."

The course, according to the spokesman, was currently not capable of turning a profit as a viable business. She added: "The complex and time consuming nature of operating racecourses means we have to ensure each one is a viable enterprise which at the moment we are not able to do with Folkestone."

There were no plans to bring horse racing back to Folkestone unless other development was allowed first.

At the time of its closure, Arena Racing was proposing a new development at the course, stating that the facilities were 'outdated' and in need of redevelopment to make it a viable business going forward.

It had proposed a large new housing development of 820 new homes on the site.

However, when Shepway's core strategy went to independent examination, the government inspector who ensures the plan is acceptable, threw the site out, ruling it should not be considered for housing as part of the area's ongoing development strategy. It was described as an

"inappropriate site" for housing; something few could argue with given its rural setting amid wide open fields on the outskirts of Hythe.

A Shepway council spokesman said: "There have been no planning applications for housing on the racecourse."

"But the owners have made longer term suggestions for development on parts of the site unconnected with the recommencement of racing. The council will be assessing these ideas later in the year, along with many other sites in the district."

The racecourse is certainly one of the most historic sporting venues in the county. Established as a race track back in 1898, it was closed during the Second World War when it was used as an airfield – or that's what the Germans believed. The race course was decked out with dummy planes and buildings in order to confuse Hitler's troops.

During the latter part of the war, the racecourse became home to a real RAF squadron, which were based at the site until July 1944.

After its wartime requisitioning, the course was restored back to its original use, hosting racing until its final race on December 18, 2012 – an event marked with big crowds and a party atmosphere.

It certainly packed a punch as one of the UK's top courses, with regular appearances from the best known flat and jump jockeys with the live television coverage they commanded.

The ward councillor for Lympe and Stanford is Shirley Newlands.

She told KoS: "It's up to the owners of the course to sort it out if they want racing back. The facilities are too small for it to be a top tier racecourse. I would really hope that housing isn't put here. There are already serious issues with water supply, and this is an area of extremely high water stress."

"The owners of the race course need to decide what to do, but I would not be supportive at all of housing."

It still remains a vital venue for the county though, with the War and Peace Revival show taking place within its grounds every year – having moved from its traditional home in Paddock Wood, and regularly pulling in thousands every summer.



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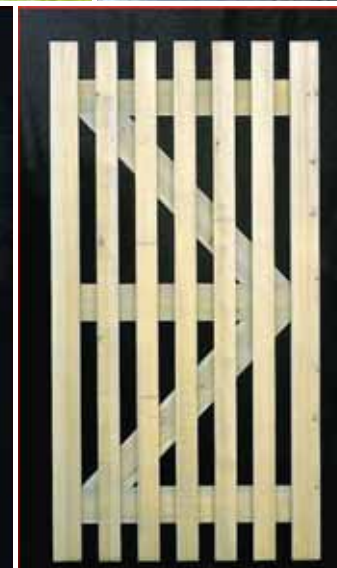
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## Shunning the stars to make community-based music

Vocal coach to the famous, Gillingham-born Juliet Russell talks about music...

AS A vocal coach, who has worked with artists as diverse as Alt-J, Yoko Ono and Paloma Faith, Juliet Russell, who was born in Gillingham, is no stranger to show business.

But now she has decided to stop singing with the stars and take to the road to promote her new album, with ground-breaking performances with community choirs across the UK.

"I love working with all types of musicians," Ms Russell told KoS.

"It is always a learning experience, and you can always create something exciting."

Hundreds of voices will perform her new album, *Earth Meets Sky*, creating a series of unique live performances.

These will be recorded, filmed, and broadcast throughout the tour on social media.

Ten choirs will feature in these concerts, with singers from diverse musical styles and life experiences joining Ms Russell on stage.

They range from an Afro-European choir, a soul choir, a drumming choir, a singing for health choir, young people with autism and Asperger's, refugees, to older people and Gospel singers.

Ms Russell says: "It's great to have the freedom to experiment in this way.

"It's a very different way to make music, which is extremely liberating."

Ben Lane, senior relationship manager in the south east for Arts Council England, said: "We are pleased to be able to support Juliet Russell through our grants for the arts programme as she embarks on a new tour across England.

"The partnership with local

musicians and singers throughout the various tour locations will bring a unique interpretation of her album to each performance."

Ms Russell adds: "Music is for everybody. It has incredible powers to lift, to soothe, to inspire and to bring people together. It's really exciting for me to perform my new album in a way that includes local people. Each performance will be different in every location".

As well as working in the music industry, Juliet has worked extensively with singers in community and health settings. Research has shown singing in choirs has a positive impact on a range of physical and psychological conditions from depression to lung disease.

Ms Russell said, "I'm a strong advocate for singing to support emotional wellbeing and health.

Singing makes you feel great and singing with others, in a choir or group is more than just fun. It releases "feel-good" chemicals in the brain and gives us something that we uniquely share as humans – innate musicality and the ability to communicate in incredible ways."

"This is the perfect combination for me both as an artist and teacher. I'm fascinated by the human voice. The choirs and musicians I work with have their own characters and talents, so their work will fuse with my songs and create something new. I love that it's going to take on a life of its own."

Juliet Russell will be performing at Colyer-Fergusson Hall in Canterbury on May 16.

For more information visit [www.julietrussell.com](http://www.julietrussell.com).

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# World class orchestra comes home to the Marlowe Theatre

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE PHILHARMONIA Orchestra brings three works to The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury, next month.

Written during the First World War, Danish Composer Carl Nielsen's Fourth Symphony Inextinguishable, is a torrent of highs and lows; a battle and a sea of calm.

Young international sensation Martin Helmchen will play Beethoven's Piano Concerto masterpiece, No 5 Emperor.

Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto is the last he ever wrote, and is known for its brooding, lamenting slow movement and its first three grand opening chords.

The final piece is Haydn's Symphony No 88, one of the best known works by "the Father of the Symphony".

The concert forms part of the Philharmonia's Nielsen Symphony Cycle, curated by the Grammy award-winning conductor Paavo Järvi.

Now in his fifth season as music director of Orchestre de Paris, Estonian-born Mr Järvi has just con-



**CONDUCTOR:** Paavo Järvi performs around the world

ducted the opening concerts of the new Philharmonie de Paris. Mr Järvi is also a guest conductor for orchestras around the world and is advisor at several music academies.

In 2015, the orchestra celebrates the 20th anniversary of the foundation of its UK and International Residency Programme, which began in 1995 with the launch of its residencies at Bedford Corn Ex-

change and London's Southbank Centre. During 2014/15 the orchestra will perform more than 35 concerts at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, among others.

The philharmonia's extensive touring schedule this season also includes a major series in Taiwan and Japan with Esa-Pekka Salonen, a tour to Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Brazil with Vladimir

Ashkenazy, and concerts in France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Poland.

The philharmonia is the Marlowe Theatre's resident orchestra.

They play at 7.30pm on April 11. Tickets, priced from £11 to £34 (concessions available; booking fee applies), are from the Box Office on 01227 787787 or at marlowetheatre.com.

## Something for all the family

MAIDSTONE Gang Show is a family variety show

The show is at Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on April 10 and 11. Tickets cost from £11.50.

Visit [www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk](http://www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk) for information.



## Comedy in Tunbridge Wells

COMEDIAN Danny Bhoy, known for appearing on BBC TV's Live at the Apollo, will be appearing in Tunbridge Wells at the Trinity Theatre on June 13.

Tickets go on sale soon - find out more by visiting the theatre's website at [www.trinitytheatre.net](http://www.trinitytheatre.net).

## And a little French show

THEATRE du Champ Exquis, bring their show Et... si (And... if) to Canterbury's Gulbenkian Theatre on April 10 and 11 at 11am and 2pm.

Visit [www.thegulbenkian.co.uk](http://www.thegulbenkian.co.uk) to find out more.



## Lies, betrayal and jokes

CONTROVERSIAL comedian Mark Thomas brings his Amnesty award-winning show Cuckooed to Folkestone's Quarterhouse on April 24. He tells the true story of how Britain's biggest arms manufacturer, BAE Systems, came to spy on him

Visit [www.quarterhouse.co.uk](http://www.quarterhouse.co.uk).

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## Figaro's Margate marriage

MARGATE'S Theatre Royal hosts opera The Marriage of Figaro on April 11 at 7.30pm.

Full price tickets are £21, concessions available. Visit [www.theatroyalmar-gate.com](http://www.theatroyalmar-gate.com).



## Hunter coming to Medway

COMEDIAN Reginald D Hunter is embarking on a new tour.

He will be performing at the Central Theatre, Chatham, on June 7.

For more information or to book, call 01634 338 338 or visit the website at [www.tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://www.tickets.medway.gov.uk)

## Soul music from the north

THE Astor Community Theatre in Deal presents a northern soul night on July 4.

Tickets cost £5.

Doors open at 7pm, and the show starts at 8pm. Visit [www.theastor.org](http://www.theastor.org).



## Central hosts Copocabana

THREE Towns Theatre Company presents Copocabana at the Central Theatre in Medway.

Performances run from April 16 to 18 at 7.30pm. There is a matinee performance on Saturday, April 18, at 2.30pm

Tickets cost £13, visit [www.medwayticket-slive.co.uk](http://www.medwayticket-slive.co.uk).

# Chatham theatre gives away its panto secrets

By Maria Chiorando

[maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk](mailto:maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk)

FOLLOWING last year's pantomime Aladdin, Chatham's Central Theatre can now announce that Only Fools and Horses' Sue Holderness will be starring in Beauty and the Beast this Christmas.

Ms Holderness is best known for playing Marlene opposite John Challis in the comedy TV favourite. The screen couple were so popular that they landed their own spin-off series, The Green Green Grass, in 2005.

Originally an unseen character, just mentioned by the likes of Del Boy and Rodney, in 1985 writer John Sullivan wrote an episode where Marlene had to appear and she got the job. From her first moment on set it became clear that Marlene was a big hit and she appeared in the sitcom until it finished in 2003.

Ms Holderness then appeared in many theatre productions including Calendar Girls before John Sullivan reunited Boycie and Marlene in a brand new Only Fools spin-off, Green Green Grass, which ran for four series from 2005 to 2009.



Only Fools and Horses was a huge hit during the 80s and 90s and became life changing for all those involved including David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst who played Del Boy and Rodney.

The 2001 Christmas Day episode drew in audience figures of 21.3 million viewers making it the most watched TV programmes of the noughties.

Ms Holderness will be playing the role of the Wicked Malevolent whose evil plans leave the Prince

not quite feeling himself and the beautiful Belle in danger.

Medway theatregoers are promised live music, wonderful sets, beautiful costumes and rip-roaring adventure in true panto style.

Beauty and the Beast is at the Central Theatre from December 10, 2015 until January 3, 2016.

Tickets are available from the box office on 01634 338338 or online at [www.medwayticketslive.co.uk](http://www.medwayticketslive.co.uk)



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# How an actress started a new career in food...

Holby City actress got more than she bargained for on Masterchef... a book deal and a new boyfriend

**L**ISA Faulkner has a lot to thank Celebrity MasterChef for. Since winning the show in 2010, the former Holby City actress has carved out a successful second career as a TV cook, and released three recipe books.

The BBC One show was also where she met Australian chef John Torode, the firm-but-fair judge who eventually became her boyfriend.

"I took on three jobs at the same time as MasterChef, thinking I would only be in it for a day, and I ended up in it until the end. That was amazing in itself," the 43-year-old says.

"It completely changed my life and I haven't stopped cooking since. It's been amazing, really."

Torode – who she began dating in

2012 – is "lovely, very lovely", according to Faulkner, who has an eight-year-old daughter, Billie, from her marriage to actor Chris Coghill.

"Somebody said, 'So what's it like at home when you're both cooking?' It's just like we're both cooking! It's not like he's going, 'Oh, you need to do that', or, 'Hurry Lisa, you've got five minutes!'," she adds with a laugh.

Things have been busy recently, with the release of her third cookbook, Tea & Cake.

"I wanted to do a book that was just about things that I liked, and memories of tea in days gone by when I was little – things like sandwiches and cake and tins of biscuits," Faulkner explains.

"We run around so much and we



**CHEF:** Lisa Faulkner in the kitchen

are all crazy busy," she adds. "We can get so caught up in everything that's going on, and sometimes just to stop for five minutes with a cup of tea in a pot and a piece of cake, it's like, 'Do you know what? Everything's actually all right!'"

Faulkner has also been collaborating with kitchen appliance maker Hotpoint, on a campaign encouraging the nation to love their kitchens and explore their cooking potential (learn more at [www.hotpoint.co.uk](http://www.hotpoint.co.uk)).

She is keen to stress that image isn't everything when it comes to baking.

"If you've made a cake for somebody you love and there are little dents in it, or the icing falls down the cake, it's how it tastes, who you've made it for and why you've made it

[that counts]," she says.

"My grandma was properly slapdash, but she was an amazing cook."

While best known for her culinary prowess these days, she hasn't bid farewell to her acting career.

"I went for something the other day – that I didn't get, sadly – but it was nice to go in again," she says.

"What's exciting for me is that I'll only go for characters that I really want, because I have another job that I absolutely love."

As for turning 43 earlier this year, she confesses: "I don't feel like I'm grown up enough to be 43, I feel like a child!"

"It's weird to think that great big number is me. But when I look back on what I've done, I think, 'God, I've fitted quite a lot in!'"

## Hitting the right note

**R**AMSGATE Operatic Society (ROS) present the latest show in the society's 50 year history – Gilbert and Sullivan's HMS Pinafore.

The piece takes place on April 16 and 17 at 7.30pm, and April 18 and 19 at 2.30pm at the Memorial Theatre in Broadstairs.

For tickets, visit [www.sarahthorne-theatrecompany.co.uk](http://www.sarahthorne-theatrecompany.co.uk) or call 01843 863701.

Prices: £10 in advance, £12 on the door.

## Spamalot on stage

**A**FTER three years in the West End, Monty Python's Spamalot will be making its way to Bromley's Churchill Theatre later this month.

Adapted from the comedy film Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the show tells the tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

Visit [www.atgtickets.com/venues/the-churchill-theatre-bromley/](http://www.atgtickets.com/venues/the-churchill-theatre-bromley/).

## Classic superhero art

**A** COLLECTION of comic book covers by the legendary Stan Lee will be unveiled at the Castle Galleries in Bluewater shopping centre.

The collection which features classic covers portraying some of the most iconic characters including Captain America, The Incredible Hulk, The Avengers and The Amazing Spider-Man. The show runs at the gallery until April 12.

## Open air cinema

**D**ARTFORD Borough Council has announced it will be bringing an outdoor cinema programme to the town this summer. Tickets for the open-air screenings in the park were in high demand last year.

A screening of Mamma Mia!, starring Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Pierce Brosnan and Colin Firth, will take place on July 29. To find out more, visit [www.dartford.gov.uk/events](http://www.dartford.gov.uk/events).








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# Reaching for the stars in Mexico

## TRAVEL REVIEW: Mexico

By Emily Boynton

STANDING in a field with my hands raised in the air, I have to admit I feel quite silly.

The idea that I might catch the sun's rays with my fingertips seems even more ludicrous, but encouraging bystanders are telling me to imagine my body being filled with a powerful energy.

We are gathered outside one of the world's greatest monuments, the Kukulkan Temple at Chichen Itza. A Mayan archaeological site and one of the Seven Wonders of the World, it's an awe-inspiring network of temples in the Yucatan Peninsula, dating back to AD 600.

The reason for my flailing hand gestures is the Spring Equinox, which is held in mid-to-late March every year.

Along with the Autumn Equinox in September, it's a big celebration for the Mayan people.

The Mayans were pioneers in astrology and each of the four sides of the Kukulkan temple has 91 steps - one step for each day of the year - with the top platform making the 365th.

It's a remarkable structure and during the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes, the sun aligns at an angle to create the shadow of a serpent creeping down the steps of the pyramid, connecting the sun to the earth.

I'm so caught up in the celebrations, I quickly forget about any embarrassment.

In reality, my energising holiday started two-and-a-half hours away at Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa, on the Riviera Maya.

Situated on a white sand beach amid lush greenery, the former private residence is made up of 63 low-rise white washed rooms and suites.

Days can be spent lazing by one of



### BEGUILING: Mexico is a riot of experiences

the three swimming pools, playing tennis, or wandering along the delightfully deserted beach.

Unlike the busy beaches at nearby Playa del Carmen, here, it is possible to walk for miles without seeing another person.

A short boat ride from the hotel is

the world's second largest coral reef, known as the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef or the Great Mayan Reef.

It covers an area of 1,000 kilometres from Isla Contoy on the eastern part of the Yucatan Peninsula, all the way to Honduras.

I overcome my fear of the choppy

water to go snorkelling, and spot an array of marine life, including parrotfish, angelfish, barracudas and butterfly fish.

Although I feel revived after the Spring Equinox celebrations, I decide a trip to the hotel's Kinan Spa will really leave me feeling like a new person.

## TRAVEL FACTS

■ Cox & Kings (020 7873 5000; [coxandkings.co.uk](http://coxandkings.co.uk)) offers a five-night stay at Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa, priced from £1,595 per person, including British Airways flights, private transfers and a Deluxe Garden Room with breakfast daily.

Treatments here are based on healing Mayan rituals, using products made with locally sourced ingredients.

Every part of the spa has been aligned with the stars to create a positive energy flow: treatment rooms point east to west, representing day and night, and the massage beds face east, symbolising new beginnings.

I decide to try the Maya Temazcal, which turns out to be one of the most unusual and memorable spa treatments I have ever experienced.

I join a small group on the beach at dusk, and as the sun disappears, a Mayan shaman leads us into a triangular structure submerged in the sand.

In the dark, seated in a circle around heated rocks, we are taken through the different stages of the Temazcal, each one dedicated to the elements of air, water, fire and earth.

Chanting, singing and drumming takes place, as the rocks are doused with herb-infused water, raising the temperature and creating an aromatic healing steam to drive out the impurities from our skin.

As the treatment ends, we run full speed into the refreshing sea.

Again, I have my hands held high in the air, only this time I'm not reaching for anything - I just seem to have found a new spring in my step.

## Film Reviews by Damon Smith



### FAST & FURIOUS 7 (12A, 137 mins) Action/Thriller/Romance

IT'S not the gleaming high-octane motors, scantily clad women or outlandish gravity-defying stunts that will have audiences burning rubber to their multiplexes to see this seventh instalment of The Fast

And The Furious franchise. Instead, it's the final screen appearance of handsome leading man Paul Walker, who died halfway through production, which will invariably guarantee super-charged box office returns for James Wan's sleek sequel. Fast & Furious 7 is dedicated to Walker's memory and his unfinished scenes have been respectfully completed using previously unseen footage from earlier films, or by digitally grafting his facial features onto the bodies of his brothers, Caleb and Cody, who act as stand-ins. A heartfelt, if protracted, coda between Diesel and Walker provides the former with an opportunity to publicly say farewell to his cinematic brother in arms.

### THE WATER DIVINER (15, 111 mins) Drama/Romance/Action

FOR his directorial debut, Russell Crowe casts himself as a crusading father, who will stop at nothing to locate his three fallen sons, in this fictional historical drama based on the book of the same name, which has been adapted for the big screen by Andrew Anastasios and Andrew Knight. The Water Diviner is a solid first effort including well-choreographed scenes of conflict and self-sacrifice during the Gallipoli Campaign in late 1915.

However, his film falls victim to heavy-handed sentiment when it comes to a central romance across the cultural divide that flourishes despite a total absence of on-screen chemistry with leading lady Olga Kurylenko. The romantic subplot doesn't work and its resolution is unintentionally hilarious but the rest of Crowe's first foray in the director's chair shows promise.



### WHILE WE'RE YOUNG (15, 97 mins) Comedy/Drama/Romance

OPENING with a quote from Ibsen's play The Master Builder, While We're Young is an acutely observed but emotionally underpowered comedy drama about a forty-something couple, who

become intoxicated by the vivacity and carefree abandon of the younger generation.

At a trim 97 minutes, While We're Young certainly doesn't outstay its welcome, but gradually runs out of steam.

Life is full of disappointments and in some respects, While We're Young is one of them.



**A**S FAMILIES enter the world of Disneyland Paris with its quirky characters, pink castle, fairy tale lands and breath-taking parades, few will notice the quality of the plants, the precision cutting of the lawns or the carefully clipped topiary.

Yet the gardens in this famous resort are vital to recreate the theme in each zone, from the prickly cacti, yucca and tamarind in the Arizona desert of Frontierland, to the exotic-looking palms (which can actually withstand temperatures of up to -18C) and bamboos in Adventureland, and piano-key topiary and manicured hillside lawns next to Sleeping Beauty's pink castle.

In the skyline of the haunted house, huge evergreen trees lean ominously towards the building, having been deliberately planted at an angle for spooky effect, while spiky shrubs hang menacingly over the tall gated perimeter, pruned to look like claws.

Pansies, heathers, heucheras and wallflowers fill the beds with the arrival of the park's colourful spring festival. But the park is also paying more than lip service to biodiversity.

Luc Behar-Bannelier, the park's director of nature and environment, has been there for 23 years.

He tells me how it has been transformed from corn and beet fields into a magical landscape which is also environmentally friendly.

When he first took on this mammoth project 25 years ago, workers had to remove tons of heavy clay soil



**PRECISION:** Mickey Mouse's face created from flowers

# Gardening secrets of Disney

and replace it with a thin layer of topsoil. Trees were brought in from as far away as British Columbia, Canada, but now they are sourced in Europe. Around 300 of the 35,000 trees are replaced every year to ensure everything remains to scale.

Over the years, the planting has attracted wildlife which hasn't been 'bought' in, says Luc.

Some 360 topiaries including a giant caterpillar, dragon, elephant and swans adorn the park. Box, yew, fast-growing box leaf honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*) and ivy are used to create the shapes – although at present there are no giraffes because the necks proved difficult to maintain.

Banks of rhododendrons and azaleas will be providing dazzling colour

in May, while grass – all 35 million square metres of it – has to be lovingly tended.

"The low fences don't stop the public from spilling out on to the raised grass verges for a better view of the parade in the hub, at the centre of the park.

Each week during the summer, new turfs are laid in this area to keep it looking good.

Gardeners have to wear harnesses and spiked shoes when mowing the steep grass hills which surround Sleeping Beauty's castle, while beds and borders throughout the park are regularly replaced with fresh, new plantings.

"No corner of the park is left to chance, no plant is allowed to dominate others," Pierrick explains.

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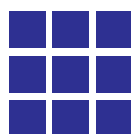
See page 47



## Blue inside

The best colour scheme for rooms

See page 50



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# How to avoid the blunders to your outdoors

**Hannah Stephenson** talks about costly errors – and some handy hints and tips to avoid them.

I'M THE first to admit I've made costly mistakes in my garden over the years.

I've planted specimens in the wrong place, made impulse buys at the garden centre of impractical plants which weren't going to survive in the frost pocket where I live and bought pretty pots that didn't go with my house or my existing collection.

But now I've opened gardener Alex Mitchell's new book, *Gardening On A Shoestring*, which gives budget-conscious gardeners some ideas on how to save money, all that waste is in the past.

"We've all done it – stumped up for plants, tools and endless bits of plastic kit and then thrown them at the garden in the hope that they will miraculously organise themselves into something beautiful," she says. But you don't need all that clutter to be a successful gardener.

Here's a few of her tips on how to create a garden on a budget:

:: Make seedy savings: Many plants grow easily from seed, including sweet peas, cosmos, flowering tobacco, cornflowers and Californian poppy. A packet containing around 100 seeds can cost you a fifth of the price of one plant. From mid-spring to early summer, just scatter them directly on to finely-raked garden soil in a sunny spot, rake them in and water well.

:: Club together: If you're buying online, group your purchases with friends to save on postage costs and look out for bargains if you order a multiple of one specific plant.

:: Garden centre or car boot?: Don't rule out cut-price pound stores and car boot sales, which often have good plants for much less. When buying plants, don't buy the ones already in full flower. Look for those with un-open flower buds or wait until the end of summer to buy shrubs and perennials, when garden centres discount their stock. Autumn is also a good time for planting.

:: Pots for a pittance: Use your imagination. Upcycle old containers such as tins, bowls and colanders to give your garden instant character. If you want to go big and brazen, brightly coloured plastic tub trays can make good flower and fruit containers. Alternatively, ask your local deli for huge empty tins which have held olive oil, or other vintage tins, taking off the labels and letting them rust naturally. Just drill holes in the bottom of them.

:: Be waterwise: Instead of investing in an expensive automatic irrigation system for your potted plants, save your old one-litre plastic bottles, discard the lid, cut off the base and push it lid end down into the compost beside your plant. When the bottle doesn't fall over, it's deep enough. Fill it with water and it will drip out gradually, direct to the plant roots.



**CREATIVE:** Old containers can be used as plant pots



**INNOVATIVE:** There are many ways to make your garden look good on the cheap

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# Add a little eco-friendly colour to your lawn



**WILD:** These flowers can attract creatures to your garden as well as making it look sensational

## Your garden can support its own eco-system – Hannah Stephenson explains how to do it...

IF YOUR planting is attracting bees, butterflies and other wildlife, your shed is devoid of pesticides and your fruit and veg are strictly organic, then you are already heading along the right road to eco-friendliness – but there are always more things you can do.

Plant bright flowers such as candytuft, sunflowers and marigolds, to encourage beneficial insects like ladybirds and lacewings. These will eat aphids such as blackfly, which can decimate your flowers and crops. Bluebells, cowslips, foxgloves and primroses are all wildflowers to add colour and beauty to any garden. Buy flowers that will bloom as late into the autumn as possible, to allow more beneficial bugs and bees plenty of time to pollinate.

Invest in a water butt. Even better, blend it in with your garden scheme by building a wooden casing around it and painting it, suggests DIY power tool experts Dremel ([www.dremel.co.uk](http://www.dremel.co.uk)). Alternatively, buy an old wine barrel as an attractive alternative and customise it so you can fill a watering can. Wooden water butts need to stand above ground level, allowing the wood to breathe from beneath.

Create your own makeshift mulch. If you have collected leaves to make leaf mould over the years, this will act as a great mulch in spring. Alternatively, use compost, bark or garden clippings which have been shredded.

Consider 'companion planting' to ward off predators. Many plant combinations mask each other with scent. The smell of Tagetes (French marigolds) will deter whitefly, while garlic and other alliums have been used as companions to keep pests at bay. Trailing nasturtiums repel woolly aphids, while bugle extract repels cabbage white caterpillars. In a similar way, leeks repel carrot flies, okra shields peppers from wind, while tall crops



**BALANCE:** Bees are hugely important

provide a canopy for short ones, such as lettuce and spinach, which prefer partial shade in the heat.

Recycle everyday packaging to use in your garden. Plastic cartons which have held pre-packed veg can be adapted as seed trays, yoghurt pots which have been thoroughly cleaned can be used to raise seedlings and larger plastic bottles with the bottoms cut off can work as makeshift cloches around young vulnerable plants. Large wooden crates can be used to store fruit and veg later on in the season.

Set up a worm compost bin if you only have a small space, and make a home for some small, red tiger worms, which you can buy. Use a wooden box with holes and a lid for a worm compost bin, add a layer of moist, shredded newspaper and soil for their bedding, then feed them once a week with vegetable peelings wrapped in newspaper or paper towels.

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# A blue-ming delightful colour trend

Blue is a great way to spruce up any room. **Gabrielle Fagan** explains why...

AT THIS time of year, even a glimpse of bright, blue sky, with its promise of spring, lifts the spirits.

But our unpredictable climate often teases, keeping us waiting for those elusive sunny horizons.

Take heart though; you can guarantee a bright outlook at home by waving a magic wand – well, a paint brush, at least – and splashing on the blues indoors. Or, if DIY would dampen your mood, simply splurge on beautiful blue homewares, currently playing a leading role in the new spring/summer ranges.

“The appeal of blue isn’t surprising, because with its strong links with nature, it’s a universal colour, surely loved in one of its forms by everyone,” says Gail Abbott, whose new book, *Blue & White Style*, is a beautifully illustrated blueprint for using the shades featured, which range from



Mediterranean to country blue.

“For instance, if pure blue veers towards the greens that lie next to it on the spectrum, it becomes aquamarine, cerulean and turquoise – cool, clear watery hues which have associations with lakes, oceans, and rivers. When tinged with purple, blue assumes the warmth seen in royal blue, indigo and navy – colours that make us feel confident and safe. There’s no



**RELAXING:** Blue can create a calming ambience

limit to the choices, and accents of blue work well in most interiors.”

Dark, rich shades, from navy to midnight blue, look dramatic, and add character and individuality to otherwise bland rooms.

“Blues are proving popular because they’re in harmony with the current industrial trend and blend with urban and architectural materials, while the darker shades on the palette enhance natural timber schemes,” says Tim Tatlock, head of buying at Topps Tiles.

“Blues meet a real range of interior needs, whether creating a statement, conjuring a calming environment, a soothing sanctuary or simply refreshing a space – the latter’s a popular choice at this time of year. Blue paintwork or tiles can give a drab, winter-weary room a lift.”

Teal, reminiscent of shimmering green-blue exotic seas, is fashionably on-trend, and is a key colour for new season homeware collections.

“Teal’s a combination of the natural harmony of green and the tran-

quillity of blue, resulting in a balanced, versatile shade, which works perfectly in any room,” advises Marianne Shillingford, creative director at Dulux.

“Combing teals with greens, such as mint, duck egg or emerald, will give a fresh, natural effect. Or for a neutral combination, choose a colour with a subtle, natural tone so you don’t overwhelm the space. Then just add the perfect finishing touch, a crisp white for woodwork, to allow this magical colour to stand out.”



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

## Traffic plans kick up a stink

THE report in KoS last week referring to tackling pollution in Tonbridge could not be further from the truth.

Kent County Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have hijacked £2.37 million from central government funds intended for improving pedestrian facilities in rundown high streets; diverting it into their traffic management budget.

The money is to be wasted on slowing traffic to 20mph with the resulting ten per cent increase in pollution caused by low gear driving and the fact every vehicle will be present in the High Street for 30 per cent longer; thus pollution increases by 40 per cent.

KCC's own design is that traffic in Tonbridge High Street is intended to become one continuous almost stagnant stream without any breaks. Most loading bays, bus stops and disabled parking facilities are to be removed. There will be a tiny proportion of money left over, this to be spent on a few seats and a tree.

I would suggest that it will be a serious health hazard to visit, let alone sit anywhere near Tonbridge High Street when this act of civic vandalism is completed next year.

**Rod Norman,**  
Tonbridge

## Hospital trauma not as it seems

A PARTY political leaflet on behalf of the Labour Party came through a colleague's door claiming that it was as a result of their petition abdominal surgery was moved back to the QEOM from Canterbury.

Nothing could be further from the truth. It was EKHUFT (East Kent Hospitals University Trust) themselves who realised the move would be unsafe and unviable.

Further down the leaflet it says, if elected Labour will employ 20,000 more nurses and 6,000 more doctors to alleviate the national problem. This wouldn't make a ha'p'oth of difference to Thanet. It is EKHUFT themselves who have, and still are, deliberately, gradually downsizing the QEOM in favour of enhancing and 'keeping the numbers up' at the William Harvey Hospital at Ashford.

The pity of it is that in December 2012 there was the possibility of

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Housing will have to go on greenfields

IN KOS (letters, last week) John Gamet wrote in support of the protection of the Green Belt.

I share his views as far as the Green Belt goes and feel it should be protected at almost all cost. However, he seems to be of the opinion that greenfield sites should be offered the same protection.

Clearly this is totally impractical and will never be the case, there will always be demand for greenfield sites for housing to meet requirements and to stop, or at least slow down, runaway house prices that young people starting out simply cannot afford.

Brownfield sites are a different kettle of fish and I agree wholeheartedly with Mr Gamet but there are in some cases cost implications for cleaning these sites up from contamination that make it impractical in financial terms for them to be used.

Mr Gamet also has a theory that areas of prime farm land have been left to deteriorate for

years so that they can be designated as brownfield; this is not and cannot be the case, the legal and political definition of brownfield sites are sites that have been previously developed and it is absurd to suggest that open farmland, whether used or unused, could be designated as brownfield, it simply would not happen.

Mr Gamet needs to realise, as do all of us, that wherever we currently live, whether it be on the 15th floor of a block of flats, a terraced house in town or a country pile, all of this land was once open virgin land in its history.

There is always going to be demand for housing land and quite rightly so. The younger generations are entitled to a home of whatever description and ought to be offered that possibility in the same way as the older generations have enjoyed.

**William Davis**  
Teynham

making both the QEOM and William Harvey trauma units; EKHUFT chose not to do so.

**Betty Renz,**  
Cliftonville

## PM future blurs SNP challenge

THE introduction of fixed term five year parliaments has unforeseen consequences.

As with a US president, the PM will not be expected to step down mid term.

David Cameron has given up the option of picking a date most favourable to his party, but instead has been attacked for proposing a TV election debate most favourable to him.

Short term I'd rather speculate on how the English will react if the SNP hold the balance of power next month.

**Martin Tapsell,**  
Deal

## Ukip not alone in scandals

JUNE Hammond (Letters, last week) seems to think that scandals are unique to Ukip. All parties have bad apples in the barrel.

Jeffery Archer for the Tories and John Stonehouse for Labour, both served prison sentences, while the Liberal Cyril Smith escaped justice, reportedly for child abuse.

Ukip really are a breath of fresh air. The other parties have had their chances over the years and sold this country down the river.

Nigel Farage is the only one who really does say how it is and gives a straight answer to a question.

**John Beadle,**  
Dartford

## Taxpayers are just 'a cash cow'

IN KOS (Letters, 22.3) I state that Damian Green MP said it doesn't matter where the cuts are made, as long as Westminster is not affected. I apologise Mr Green – you never said that.

But I do still feel that Mr Green, nor the rest of the Tory party, care where they make cuts as long as their subsidies are not affected - for example food, drink and expenses.

I also feel MPs and Lords think the taxpayer is just another cash cow to be exploited as often as possible.

And yet the people of Britain are still being penalised for the catastrophic blunders of the bankers. It's time for a change.

**RC Dryland,**  
Ashford

## Library petition needs your help

MIGHT I remind readers a very important consultation on the future of Kent libraries, registration, and archive services closes on April 8?

KCC favours contracting an independent charitable trust, funded by the council, to run the services in the future.

Such a trust would be expensive to set up and run. It could put the future of many smaller libraries in jeopardy, as it seeks to reduce costs.

The consultation documents are online or at all KCC libraries.

**Terry Cloud,**  
Pembury

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles.

These are key to ensuring we provide you, our readers, with an assurance of quality, fairness and balance in everything we do.

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### Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.

- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
- 9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

- 10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday. If you have any queries, please contact the editor, at [chris.britcher@archant.co.uk](mailto:chris.britcher@archant.co.uk)





## Hever Castle

by Sue Garnar from  
Woodchurch

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**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

**ATTRACTIVE** lady early 50s, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, W/LTM professional, caring gent, 50-60s for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569

**ADVENTUROUS** sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any area. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301

**JAN** 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

**ANNE**, mid 40s, cheerful busy curvy affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

**ALISON** 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

**DISCREET** lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409901

**ALISON** 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

**TARA**, confident lady, long legs, long hair, seeks a saucy man of any age for daytime, no strings fun. Tel No: 0905 002 1913 Box No: 414701

**DEBORAH** 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

**ATTRACTIVE** black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

**MAY** sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

**SUE** young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, the-atre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171

**JACKIE** 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

**BECKY** 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeking loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

**LINDA** 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

**TERESA** 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081

**LUCY** stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077

**PETITE** blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077

**SARAH** 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841

**ANGIE** attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, W/LTM honest, fun male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

**LISA** attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549

**SUE** 65, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, W/LTM kind, shyish man for friendship, maybe more. Thelnet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735

**BLONDE** female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675

**INTELLIGENT** funny guy without a huge ego required for damaged heart. Casey 39, size 10, curves in all the right places, pretty, kind, loving, genuine, romantic and available. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415509

**BLACK** lady 43, sincere, down to earth, fun loving, likes theatre, cinema, meals out, walks, seeking white gent with GSOH, sincere and down to earth. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415477

**JENNY** voluptuous blonde tanned well-presented female, enjoys being and giving pampering, cooking, cosy nights, looking for some broadminded excitement. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415399

**JOYCE** 39, attractive GSOH, loves nights out, honest, loyal, fun to be with, looking for mature male for adult companionship, meals out and hopefully more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415561

**NICOLETTE** 32 petite professional attractive black female looking for similar hardworking white male who like me loves life and is serious about finding a LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415545

**PAT** blonde blue eyed curvy, cuddly female, attractive, likes swimming, gardening, holidays, my job/home, looking for happiness with quiet content grounded male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415533

**MANDY** 35, petite attractive slim female with very GSOH, likes to keep fit, meals in/out, W/LTM genuine child friendly guy/dad for fun times together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415513

**JACKIE** very pretty leggy well-mannered/educated 28yr old female, loves nights in/out, sports, W/LTM sincere male up to 35yrs for friendship, hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415377

**DONNA** 36yrs un-moist but very attractive, nice eyes, good figure, GSOH, OHAC, great job, sick of never meeting Mr Right, looking for someone special. Genuine male please. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415187

**ALISON** 27yr old very bored broadminded female with plenty of free time on her hands looking for some adult fun times. Call me, I won't disappoint. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415177

**DEE** lonely divorced female, slim, bubbly, attractive redhead, loves cuddles, looking for a man who can restore my faith in love and make me laugh. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414961

## Men Seeking

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**PETITE** Asian lady, slim, N/S, seeks genuine N/S male for win/dining, fun and frolics. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414515

**KAREN** 35 petite dark haired/eyed affectionate, caring, lovely female with many interests looking for genuine ltr from loving soul mate, dark haired preferred. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414205

**JULIE** good looking 40's female, medium build, size 12, loveable, considerate, OHAC, likes nights in/out, walking, seeking loving male without lots of baggage. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414387

**HELEN** 19yr old bubbly female looking for male to take me out and show me a good time. No pressure just fun times, no time wasters. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414223

**FREE** single 25yr old busty curvy black beauty, sensual, confident, interesting, looking for handsome man to call me back. Race/age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414219

**BLUE** eyed slim pretty easy going hardworking lady seeking male to put the spark back into my life, must be honest, affectionate, have a GSOH and want to work at a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414217

**MARY** tall blonde size 12 lady, nice personality, good conversationalist, varied and open to interests, loves weekends away/holidays, seeking similar male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414179

**MO** 36yr old slim blue eyed pretty blonde looking for fun times with non-judgemental, discreet, kind male. Age/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414215

**JANE** 29, loves riding and spending time horsing around, seeking non-serious kind of normal guy who enjoys going out having a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414205

**KAREN** young looking attractive vibrant slim blonde, enjoys to keep fit, beach walks, travel, meals in/out, good conversation with pleasant company, W/LTM genuine sincere male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414203

**SANDRA** attractive lady seeking someone special to help regain my trust in the male species. Only genuine guys pls, I will be worth your time, you won't be disappointed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414195

**TRACY** 35yr busty bubbly out there sized 18 lady looking for a caring loving guy who appreciates womanly curves, over indulgences and having fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414189

**SLIM** tall, elegant, feminine, N/S, solvent lady, young 50's, likes travel, red wine, seeks tall, sincere, military, retired, professional gentleman of high calibre. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414251

**WIDOW** late 60's, likes most things, seeking a lonely gent, 70-75 to make me love and laugh again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414093

**JACKIE** extremely sensual lady but for your eyes-only! likes horses, keeping fit, gardening looking for genuine love interest and companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414721

**TERI** separated single lady, blonde, blue eyes, slim, W/LTM compatible male for genuine friendship, meals out, weekends away, nights out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414361

**FEMALE** seeking male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

**DEBBIE** brown eyed attractive social female, romantic, good listener, loves children, looking for similar nice male/dad to get to know, hopefully leading to more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414383

**EMMA** slim 5ft 8ins, single employed female with OHAC, enjoys many interests, gym, music, easy-going, genuine, supportive, seeking similar male for a chat, maybe a date. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414957

**KATIE** 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

**JANE** 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, W/LTM not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

**MARY** 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests W/LTM likeminded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

**CLARE** 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053

**SHARON** 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

**SLIM** petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

**FREYA** 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

**MARILYN** really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871



**JAN** 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

**BBW** 51, caring, solvent, seeks male of similar age for fun times and socialising. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413621

**FEMALE** 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

**PETITE** slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

**SARAH** 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum W/LTM similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

**JULIE** attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, W/LTM someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411513

**LINDA** 37, green eyes, attractive, bubbly size 12, enjoys cosy nights in, text chats, seeking tallish fun guy for meals out, pubs, clubs and spending quality times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411033

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**64YR** old lady, seeking male for friendship, companionship, outings and interesting conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411975

**CAROLINE** 39yr old pretty blonde looking for handsome caring man to put the sparkle back into my life and make each other feel special. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411891

**33YR** old sick of being single working mum, OHAC, likes the simple things in life, looking for romantic, honest guy with GSOH for cosy nights in and fun nights out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411887

**SUSAN** seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

**CINDY** 31 attractive size 12 brown eyed blonde, new to this but sick of passing up potential soul mate so thought I wd give it a go. Aca. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411873

**RITA** divorced care worker with no ties, 5ft 1ins, dark hair, enjoys meals out, cosy nights in, seeking male 45-55 with GSOH and similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411775

**CATHY** very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301

**WOULD** you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395

**MARIE** 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit active, W/LTM fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037

**SOPHIE** 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717

**34YR** single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410305

**BUSTY** Caribbean lady who loves music, dance and singing, looking for nice older guy for mutual adult no strings fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410305

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**SOLAR:** Toddington Harper says investors can now access the alternative energy market

## Will sun shine on bid for solar investment?

by **Jamie Weir**

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

INVESTORS in Kent are being invited to take advantage of a new renewable energy bond scheme, which gives them access to the lucrative solar market.

Company Big60Million has launched the new £5.8 million community bond offering for stakes in a 9.2 megawatt site in Paddock Wood.

Investors are being invited to buy secured five-year bonds for £60 each - with the promise of six per cent gross annual interest.

More than just the return, the

company says it is looking to open up access to an otherwise difficult market, while also helping to make a social impact.

CEO of the company, Toddington Harper, explains: "We want to put power in the hands of the people and help them make money and build a better world for their families by investing in the future."

"Spiralling energy bills, climate change, and loss of wildlife are global problems that affect everyone but these Big60Million solar projects give ordinary people and local businesses the chance to make a lasting difference to their community."

The new solar farm will produce

enough energy to power 2,820 homes each year, using a site which is 25 hectares - that's roughly the same as 35 football pitches.

According to Big60Million, the site will not only produce clean energy, but enhances the biodiversity of the area as well.

The company says the raised solar panels which it uses enhance the area's ecology, will leave around 95 per cent of the land free to be transformed into a nature sanctuary, with habitat for birds, bats, and also endangered animals like hedgehogs.

To find out more visit : [www.Big60Million.co.uk](http://www.Big60Million.co.uk)

## Data security no problem for Absols

MAIDSTONE based IT support firm Absols has taken a leap forward earning two national standards to underline its credentials.

It took just eight weeks to get the seal of quality, and the assurance of IT information and security management.

The achievements follow last year's success when it hired its first apprentice.



## Selep praised for social enterprise

MINISTER for Civil Society, Rob Wilson says he is backing the South East Local Economic Partnership (Selep) in trying to make its area the social enterprise capital. He said: "I was highly impressed with the strength of partnership working and the real focus being given in the programme to helping those most in need."

## Leading business women honoured

TOP business women from across the county were celebrated at the prestigious Kent Women in Business Awards ceremony.

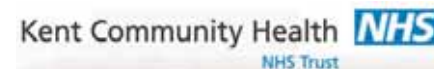
A total of 11 awards were up for grabs. Winner of Kent Business Woman of the Year was Rebecca Riches of communications agency The Hub.



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# Accountants make great new addition

Gibbons Mannington and Phipps is very pleased to announce that Joseph Greenslade has been made a partner with effect of April 1 2015. Joseph will be based in the Rye office, where he has been working as a manager for the last four years. He is ACCA qualified, specialising in Owner Managed Business clients, as well as being an expert in cloud based accounting systems.

The team is also pleased to announce that on April 1 2015 Gibbons Mannington and Phipps converted from a Partnership to a Limited Liability Partnership, Gibbons Mannington and Phipps LLP. This helps to significantly modernise the practice and ensure it remains competitive in the market-place.

## A history of accountancy to be proud of

This announcement comes in Gibbons Mannington and Phipps' 115th year. Not many firms can boast a provenance of looking after local individuals and businesses for over 100 years proving the ethos 'it's not about numbers...it's about people' stands the test of time. The firm's three office practice is the result of a number of firms that have amalgamated during the 115 years of existence, which has only strengthened knowledge of local business and the challenges they



**PARTNER:** Senior partner David Hawkins congratulates partner Joseph Greenslade on his new position with the firm

face.

All partners are qualified Chartered Accountants or Chartered Certified Accountants and the firm has extensive knowledge of specialist areas which include Farming, Charities, Medical and Dental Practices, Audit and Tax planning.

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By Steve Loader  
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**MAZDA2:** New Japanese supermini offers premium brand values and eco savings at mainstream prices, all packaged with great sporting style



## Mazda2 is 'too' much for most of its supermini rivals

ANYONE launching a supermini now must recognize that the Ford Fiesta still takes some beating – seven years after launch.

But here's a whippersnapper that looks sharp against Ford's old timer – the all-new Mazda2 (from £11,995).

Mazda's new baby echoes the Kodo design language that already makes the Japanese marque's excellent 3, 6 and CX-5 SUV models stand out – look out too for the forthcoming CX-3 junior SUV.

Part of the sleekness comes also from a wheelbase 80 mm longer than its predecessor, while the car's overall length has increased by 140mm.

It makes for a huge cabin, seating five easily and oozing premium levels of class – an impression upheld on the move.

Mazda has avoided big spending on blue sky technologies, recognizing that industry pioneers will need to recoup their investment by licensing any successes anyway. The brand has concentrated instead on its homegrown Skyactiv suite of current technologies to deliver weight-saving, better aerodynamics, and engines that are more eco-friendly, economical and powerful.

The 2's new 1.5-litre petrol engine is not turbocharged, yet it's sporty and free-revving



with excellent economy and low emissions – the unit is available with 75PS (74bhp), 90PS and 115PS outputs and five or six-speed manual gearboxes, or a six-speed auto. There's also a 1.5-litre diesel, which I didn't get to test.

The chassis is exemplary; tautly set up like a hot hatch, but without the teeth-rattling I expected on my sprint across Dartmoor – sheep permitting.

Not only does the car feel secure on tight corners but there is little lean either, thanks to a body and chassis structure making generous use of lighter ultra-high tensile steels.

Admittedly, the newcomer can sound a bit 'busy' when you do exploit the peppery engine and chassis, but this Fiesta rival underpins Mazda's designs to remain a good value brand with premium aspirations.



# Classy city slicker chic on the cheap

French marque's classy little 108 city slicker shows how urban motoring can be smart, fun, affordable and very well-connected, writes **Steve Loader...**

**S**OUNDING like a departing presenter from Top Gear, one opinion expressed when I arrived somewhere in a Peugeot 108 city car was: "Heaven save us from gutless and tiddly Noddy cars."

But the argument is surely: "Save the planet with more cars like this."

The 108 is not perfect, but its tiny dimensions pack everything that most of us will ever need while on the road, and yet it's no eco motoring equivalent of sackcloth and ashes. Indeed, it is best evidence yet of the French marque's vow to move upmarket.

Priced from £8,245, the 108 replaces the 107 and is a far posher and more grown up city runabout than its predecessor, while emphasising Peugeot's other recent declaration that all its model numbers will now end in an eight.

Like the 107, it's one of a trio of three and five-door door city car clones developed jointly by Toyota, Peugeot and Citroën to offset the big costs of creating a small car with matching profits.

The 108 is the classiest of the trio and Peugeot is making much of the electric rollback Top! option tested



here, with its stout fabric roof in black, grey or purple and starting at £10,345 - just £850 more than its hard roof equivalent.

Admittedly, the mechanism robs some rear headroom in the otherwise spacious cabin, but 'Open-Top!' life is to be recommended, with only

the mildest ruffling and extra noise at city speeds - faster, and you need to crank up the sound system.

Indeed, this is where the 108's upper crust veneer starts to wear thin because, as the revs and speed climb, so the slightly thrashy three-pot engines also spoil the fun a little.



One is a heavily revised 998cc unit from the 107 and offering 68bhp and an official combined 68.9mpg, while the other (as tested) is Peugeot's new 1,199cc engine offering 82bhp and 65.7mpg respectively. Both come with five-speed manual boxes as standard, and escape road tax - CO2

## Peugeot 108 Top! Allure 1.2 3-dr

Price:	from £11,995
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	VW Up

emissions are below the 100g/km threshold.

On the road, the gearshift and clutch action on both powertrains is vague and there's a definite lean on the bends, suggesting enthusiastic drivers may well look to the VW/Skoda/SEAT trio of city clones or Hyundai's grown up i10, but does this really matter within such a strong overall package?

Apart from the Top! option there are a squillion customisation permutations, a funky dashboard with big touchscreen - standard on most versions - with good device connectivity, clever stowage, generous passenger space for four, plus a much-needed bigger boot - 196 litres versus the 107's 139 - made even better by a clever parcel cover that clings automatically to the tailgate glass as it is opened.



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PEUGEOT

Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km) for the 108 range are: Urban 52.3 - 62.8 (5.4 - 4.5), Extra Urban 74.3 - 83.1 (3.8 - 3.4), Combined 65.7 - 74.3 (4.3 - 3.8) and CO2 99 - 88 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Terms and conditions apply, participating dealers only or visit [www.peugeot.co.uk](http://www.peugeot.co.uk). To finance your lease we may introduce you to a limited number of lenders. \*Passport Personal Lease: A guarantee may be required. Over 18s only. Written quotations available on request from Peugeot Financial Services, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill RH1 1QA. Peugeot Citroën Retail UK is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. 108 Active 3dr 1.0 68, customer initial rental £2,079, optional final rental £4,995. 35 monthly rentals payable. 6,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charges may apply. If you choose to pay the optional final rental, you can pay an annual rental equivalent to one of your monthly rentals but will not own the car. Ownership is possible with Passport - ask us for details. Offer available on cars ordered by 31/04/15. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Information correct at time of going to press.



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## Riviera of Flowers & Gardens, Monaco & Portofino by Rail - afternoon departure - 1 June, 2015

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Champagne  
Check-in

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8 days, **£949pp** • Quote: IB9-KOS

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**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Champagne check-in at London St Pancras • Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel from St Pancras to Barcelona (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris • 6 nights half-board stay at a 4 star hotel in Tossa de Mar • Excursions as stated • Transfers abroad





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**Closing date: 17/04/15**

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:  
**Carolyn Flegg, Outpatients Manager**  
07479 988411

**Business Office Supervisor – Dover**

Full time Hours: 37.5 hours per week  
Salary: £18,000 - £22,000

- Qualifications
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**Closing date: 17/04/15**

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:  
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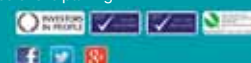
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• will develop their own resources to supplement teacher resources.  
• will be familiar with the use of ICT resources and teacher resources.  
The School received a very positive Ofsted Report recently and was rated 'good' in every category. Thamesview is a new school build that benefits from innovative learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment. We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities. Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on 01474 566552 ext 1120 or email [k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk](mailto:k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk).

**Closing Date: 7th April 2015, 9.00am**

**Interviews: Week Commencing 20th April 2015**

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

*We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.  
Appointment to this post will require an Enhanced Disclosure via the  
Disclosure and Barring Service*



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## Do you have what it takes to serve our diverse communities?

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We are currently accepting applications for new Police Constables to join Kent Police. It's one of the most demanding professions, but also one of the most rewarding. Working at the heart of the community to help us to continue to provide a first class service to the public, you will make an important difference for our diverse communities, every day. What's more, you'll help Kent Police achieve our aim to become the best force in the country. And you will benefit from all the support and training you need to grow and develop.

Learn more and apply at [www.kent.police.uk/officer](http://www.kent.police.uk/officer)

Kent Police is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Communications with Kent Police may be recorded for monitoring purposes.

## SCIENCE TECHNICIAN

**37 hours per week for 39 weeks per year**  
**Kent Salary Range 4 (rates as at April 2015)**  
**£16,634.00 – £17,475.00 per annum**  
**Pro rata to £14,035.77 – £14,745.41**

We are seeking to appoint a passionate member of support staff who will join the Science Department to work closely with and support the needs of both our teaching staff in this area and the students participating in practical lessons, providing general assistance for the maintenance and cleanliness of the learning spaces and equipment used.

Our ideal candidate will have experience or knowledge of Health and Safety procedures especially as they relate to Science lessons and chemicals, and an understanding of the appropriate cleaning, maintenance, use and storage of equipment and machinery.

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We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities.

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**Closing Date: 7th April 2015, 9.00am**  
**Interviews: Week Commencing 20th April 2015**

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

*Appointment to this post is subject to a criminal background check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).*

*Thamesview School operates a no smoking policy*

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 or telephone 01322 341166



### PLANNING

#### THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

**Y15/0211/SH** - Holly Cottage North Street New Romney Kent TN28 8DL - Erection of a shed.

**Y15/0191/SH** - 73 - 79 The Old High Street Folkestone Kent CT20 1RN - Change of use of ground floor to a flexible use spanning use classes A1 (retail), B1 (business) and D1 (non-residential institutions), the formation of a third floor in connection with the creation of four additional self-contained residential units with ancillary studio space (creating eight in total), together with alterations to the ground floor street frontages and the second floor windows.

**Y15/0274/SH** - Homepeak House Bartholomew Street Hythe Kent CT21 5BB - Felling of a Sycamore tree situated within a conservation area.

**Y15/0256/SH** - 70 & 72 High Street (Aldi) Hythe Kent CT21 5AL - Display of 3 non-illuminated wall mounted signs.

**Y15/0277/SH** - Heppinge Rectory Lane Saltwood Hythe Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: felling of a Norway Spruce; 1.5 metre overall crown reduction and 20% crown thin of a Cherry; crown reduction back to previous pruning points of a row of Sycamores and crown reduction of two Sycamores and an Ash by reducing the height by 3 metres and the laterals by 1 metre.

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to [planning@shepway.gov.uk](mailto:planning@shepway.gov.uk) or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

The applications marked (\*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health  
 Shepway District Council



### LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Licensing Act 2003

##### Application for a New Premises Licence

**Name of Applicant:** Mr Ilesh V Patel

**Premises:** West Street Newsagents Ltd – 54-56 West St Sittingbourne Kent ME10 1AR

##### Proposed Licensable activities:

Sale of alcohol – Mon – Sat 06:00 until 23:00  
 Opening Hours – Mon – Sun 05:00 until 18:00

**Date of Notice :** 27th March 2015

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department

Swale Borough Council  
 Swale House  
 East Street  
 Sittingbourne  
 Kent, ME10 3HT

Objections must be received within 28 days of the date of this notice.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

### LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

#### HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

##### STOPPING UP OF LAND AT SITTINGBOURNE INDUSTRIAL PARK

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Maidstone Magistrates' Court on 14 May 2015 at 14:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on Land at Sittingbourne Industrial Park as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Joy Ukadike by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email [joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk](mailto:joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk), or by telephone 03000 416791 before 6 May 2015 quoting reference number LS/21/103074/657.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Joy Ukadike using the contact details shown above.

JOHN BURR

DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund

Ashford Highway Depot  
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 Javelin Way  
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 Kent  
 TN24 8AD



#### Public Notice

Southborough Town Council intends to transfer a plot of open public space land consisting of recreation ground, playing fields and informal open space of approximately 3.8 acres to Kent County Council for use towards the mixed use Southborough Hub development.

The land has pedestrian access from the A26 London Road and links to the Ridgeway.

For further details please contact the Town Clerk at [brenda.wickens@southboroughcouncil.co.uk](mailto:brenda.wickens@southboroughcouncil.co.uk)

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

##### APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

We Flexford Ltd hereby give notice that we have made an application to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the grant of a New Premises Licence to in respect of the following licensable activities:-

1. sale by retail of alcohol
2. provision of regulated entertainment and
3. Late Night Refreshment

In respect of the premises situated at 1, Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5TA to be known by the sign of One Warwick Park, currently known as The Brew House Hotel and The Old School House.

The application can be viewed at the offices of the Licensing Authority, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, The Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except public holidays) or [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk). Any person wishing to make representations concerning this application should do so in writing to the above local authority giving in detail stating the grounds of objection and within 28 consecutive days of the submission of the application that is by no later than 23rd April 2015.

Any person may make representations on licensing objectives grounds only i.e the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £5,000.

Stephen Thomas LAW,  
 8, Grassmere, Leybourne, Kent ME19 5QP  
 Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the applicant.



# Is this our ultimate sport XI?

We compile a list of who we believe are the county's top sports personalities spanning the generations

## Sporting heroes

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**K**ent has produced a great deal of talent over the years in the fields of politics, business, entertainment and sport. But who have been the biggest names?

This Easter weekend, we take a look at who we believe would make the county's all-time top XI.

## George Cohen

As part of the famous 1966 squad which defeated Germany 4-2 on that glorious day at Wembley nearly 50 years ago, his place in history is assured.

A celebrated right back, he spent his entire career with Fulham, from 1956 to 1969. In that time Cohen made some 459 appearances before hanging up his boots.

After he gave up playing, he took to managing teams. He led the Tonbridge Angels to Kent Senior Cup glory during the 1974-75 season. He, alongside four other members of the World Cup winning squad, were awarded the MBE in 2000 for their part in England's success.

After quitting football he ran an estate agents in Tunbridge Wells, where he continues to live today.

## Kelly Holmes

For many years, it looked as though her place in history may be a little more obscure. But then came the Athens Olympic Games in 2004.

After a career dogged by injury and a fear of failure, she won not only the 1,500m but 800m titles to claim a glorious double gold which would forever cement her place in the hearts of the nation - and with it, the title of the UK's most successful middle distance runner.

Born and raised in Hildenborough, where today she runs a cafe in addition to a busy calendar of media work, she kicked off her sporting career as a 12-year-old when she joined the Tonbridge Athletics Club.



**HEROES:** Kelly Holmes and Lizzy Yarnold.



**MOTORS:** Surtees and Shakey are two of the county's fastest  
Pictures: ANDY KELLY

before joining the Lotus F1 team, winning the 1964 title. A regular at Brands Hatch, he remains actively involved in motorsport - despite the death of his son, Henry, 18, in 2009 following a freak accident during a Formula 2 race at the Kent circuit.

## Charlotte Edwards

Charlotte Edwards has recently celebrated leading the England women's cricket team for the 200th game as captain - during which time she has played a major role in boosting the women's game.

A key role model, in 2014 she was named one of the five cricketers of the year by cricket bible Wisden.

She has made it a habit collecting women's cricketing titles starting with being the youngest player ever to play for England at just 16-years-old. She has also become the only female cricketer to score 2,000 runs in T20 Internationals, and has scored 4,000 runs for Kent since joining the county side.

## Karen Stupples

Born in Dover and having grown up in Deal, she shot to fame with success in the 2004 Women's British Open in a year which saw her become one of the most successful female players in the world.

It also secured her place in the following year's Solheim Cup - the women's equivalent of the Ryder Cup.

She may have struggled to emulate that success since, but she remains a high profile figure in the women's game, joining the BBC commentary team for the Ryder Cup and appearing on the Golf Channel.

## Lizzy Yarnold

Everyone knows the name Lizzy Yarnold after the brave skeleton racer took the gold medal in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

The 26-year-old Olympian was born in Sevenoaks, attending Maidstone Grammar School for Girls. In 2013, she began a run of wins which included gold at the Skeleton World Cup, as well as gold in the 2014 Winter Games. She continued the spate of successes, most recently taking gold at the 2015 European Championships.

## Shane Byrne

The Sheppey-based rider made history when he became the first man to win the British Superbike Championship on four occasions, his fourth just last year.

He had a short-lived spell in MotoGP before returning to once again establish himself as a BSB legend. He is aiming of glory next season.



She retired from athletics shortly after the Olympics.

## Colin Cowdrey

For anyone who has followed cricket in the last 65 years, the Cowdrey name carries an awful lot of weight.

And it originated with Colin Cowdrey, a genuine legend of the game who captained Kent and England in a glorious first class career stretching from 1950 to 1976.

He ended up scoring almost 43,000 first-class runs, with more than 7,500 for England.

His son Chris would go on to also skipper Kent and England, while other son Graham would also have a long and successful career for Kent.

The family links continues too, with Fabian Cowdrey, his grandson also now playing for Kent.

## Roy Hodgson

England manager, and Kent football legend Roy Hodgson has come a long way since plying his trade among the non-league clubs of Kent.

He kicked off his career at Crystal Palace in 1965, but, unable to break into first team play moved to non-league football first at the Tonbridge

Angels, then Gravesend and Northfleet, Maidstone and Ashford.

Management ambition took him abroad and to Sweden where he rose up through the ranks. He managed the Switzerland national side before moving to Italian giants Inter Milan.

He would eventually return to the UK where he managed the likes of Blackburn Rovers and Fulham before being the surprise choice for the England hotseat in 2012.

## David Gower

For many Kent fans, it has always been a regret that one of England's most entertaining and exciting players slipped through their fingers.

Born and bred in the county - he was born in Tunbridge Wells and attended schools in Hawkhurst and Canterbury - it was with Leicestershire he would find a home in county cricket.

And from there he would go on to dazzle for England, including a spell as captain during the 1980s.

Today, he fronts Sky Sports' cricket coverage and has become a hugely popular presenter and pundit.

## Martin Corry

As a school boy in Tunbridge Wells,

attending St John's Primary and then Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, he started his rugby career with the town's youth team.

A versatile player, after leaving Kent for university, he made his name in rugby union first with Newcastle Gosforth, then Bristol and eventually spending more than a decade with the Leicester Tigers.

He broke into the England team in 1997 and was part of the 2003 England World Cup winning squad.

In 2005 he became captain for the first time.

## John Surtees

Edenbridge motorsport legend John Surtees has done something never equalled by any other person; winning world championships on both two and four wheels.

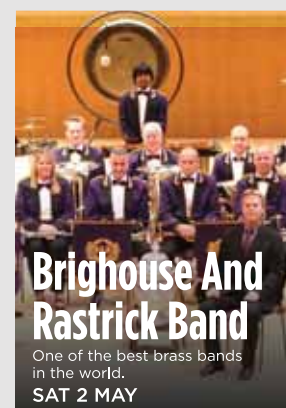
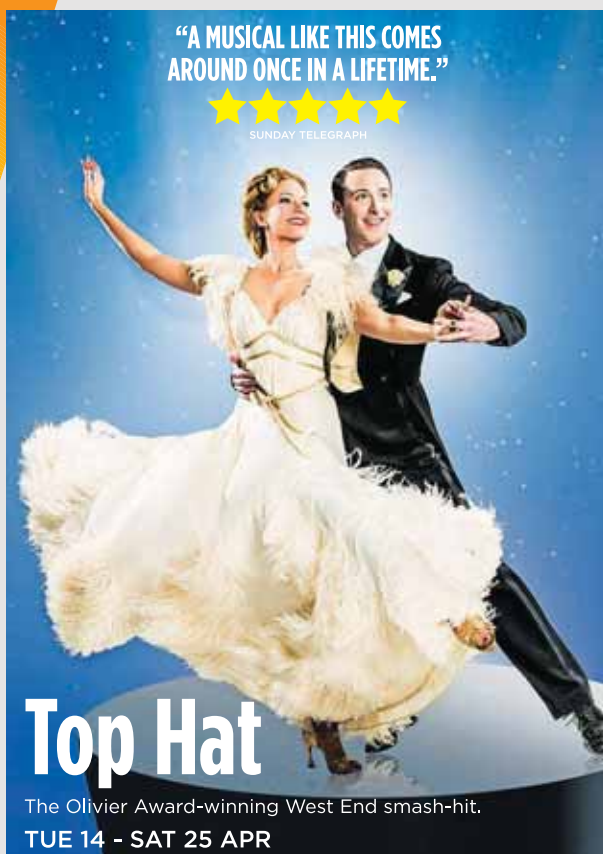
The celebrated racer began his career in 1949 as a passenger for his father, who was a sidecar racer.

He joined the celebrated MV Augusta team and won a host of titles, and an MBE,



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